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Babylon taken, and Nabonadius slain by the Persians.

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# UNIVERSAL HISTORY,

## *ANCIENT AND MODERN;*

FROM

## THE EARLIEST RECORDS OF TIME,

TO

## THE GENERAL PEACE OF 1801.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

*BY WILLIAM MAVOR, L. L. D.*

VICAR OF HURLEY IN BERKSHIRE, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL OF DUMFRIES.

Factorum est copia nobis.

. . . . . .

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VOL. II.

NEW-YORK:

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THE

# HISTORY

OF

# THE CANAANITES, PHILISTINES, AND JEWS;

ALSO, OF THE

# ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN EMPIRES.

*BY WILLIAM MAVOR, L. L. D.*

VICAR OF HURLEY IN BERKSHIRE, CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL OF DUMFRIES,

AUTHOR OF THE BRITISH NEPOS, &c. &c.

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N. B. The two next volumes will contain the History of Greece from the earliest periods till its subjugation into a Roman Province.

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# UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

## THE HISTORY OF THE CANAANITES AND PHILISTINES.

### SECT. I.

*The History of Canaan.*

UNDER the general denomination of Canaanites are included the seven nations, distinguished in scripture by the names of Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgasites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Canaanites, properly so called. They appear to have laboured in a particular manner under the evil influence of the curse denounced against their progenitor, Canaan: being doomed in the end to subjection, expulsion, or extirpation: and were in all probability, subdivided into many little kingdoms; since we read of thirty-one Canaanitish kings, who were subdued by the victorious arms of Joshua.

With respect to customs, manners, arts, sciences, and language, these nations may be supposed to have differed widely from each other, according to the different courses of life, which naturally resulted from their respective situations. Those who resided on the seacoasts were mer-



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chants, in which capacity they will be considered when spoken of as Phœnicians, for by that name they were afterward known to the Greeks. The others, who had an inland situation, were partly employed in rural avocations, and partly in the exercise of arms. Those who resided in the walled cities and fixed abodes, cultivated the land; and those who wandered about, grazed cattle, or carried arms; so that it is easy to discern among them the several distinct classes of merchants, artificers, soldiers, shepherds, and husbandmen. It is also sufficiently obvious, that they were well appointed for war; that their towns were well fortified, and themselves well supplied with military weapons; that they were enterprising, obstinate, and almost invincible; and by no means deficient in craft or policy.

Their religion seems to have been undefiled to the days of Abraham, who acknowledged Melchisedek as a priest of the most high God: but after this period they degenerated apace; and in the days of Moses were become incorrigible idolaters; for he strictly enjoined the Israelites not to intermarry with them, but to "destroy their altars, overthrow their images, cut down their groves, and smite them without mercy." They are said to have compelled their children to pass through fire to the idol Moloch; to have contaminated their altars with human sacrifices; and to have abandoned themselves entirely to the gratification of their impure desires. Of their government nothing more can be said, than that they were comprehended in a great number of states under subjection to chiefs or kings; and that all their business was transacted in popular assemblies.

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The beginning of their history is extremely dark, and much encumbered with the hypotheses of the learned, who have contemplated their antiquities. They are supposed, upon the increase of their families, to have possessed themselves of the Arabian side of Egypt; and there to have erected a kingdom coeval with that of Mizraim. But the incongruity, which subsisted between their customs and those of the Egyptians, occasioned some fierce contentions, which terminated in their total expulsion.

The first *authentic* account of this people applies to the inhabitants of the vale of Siddim, who were invaded by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and reduced to pay an annual tribute. Thirteen years after their subjugation they revolted, and determined to dispute their rights with the conqueror; but their effort proved unsuccessful, and they were chastised with the most exemplary rigour. At this time Lot was taken captive, and rescued by his kinsman Abraham. B. C. 1912.

No further mention is made of their concerns during the space of fifteen years; but at length a terrific judgment was executed on the inhabitants of Siddim, in consequence of their gross impiety and uncleanness. Four cities of this fertile and pleasant vale, Sodom, Gommorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, were at once destroyed by fire and brimstone; and the whole tract of country in their vicinage was consumed, and became the Dead sea, or lake Asphaltites. B. C. 1897.

After this destruction of one branch of the Canaanites, with their whole territory, except the city of Bela, the Hittites treated with Abraham respecting the cave of Machpelah, and their

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behaviour towards that patriarch merits our warmest approbation.

B. C. 1734. Nothing material occurs after this transaction, for the space of one hundred and twenty-eight years, when Hamor, king of Shechem, sold a piece of ground to Jacob: and Dinah, the daughter of that patriarch, enflamed Shechem, the son of Hamor, with the most ardent and ungovernable passion; in consequence of which, he violated her chastity, and brought that dreadful massacre upon his unfortunate subjects, which is circumstantially detailed in the thirty-fourth chapter of the book of Genesis.

When Moses first advanced towards the borders of the promised land, the Canaanites in the south-eastern parts of the country united with the Amalekites, to impede the progress of Israel; but they were eventually unsuccessful, though permitted to repulse such of the chosen people as attempted to enter their territory against the express decree of God. Arad was king in the south-eastern part of Canaan, when Moses had a *second* time advanced to the frontiers. He went out against the invaders, and took many of them prisoners; but he was afterward completely vanquished, and his country utterly destroyed.

Sihon, the Amorite, residing in the ancient country of the Moabites and Ammonites, being requested to grant a free passage through his country to the Israelites, marched out to oppose them; but he sustained an overthrow at Jaazer, which was attended with the loss of all his possessions.

B. C. 1452. Og, king of Bashan, is reckoned among the sovereigns of the Amorites: he was of the race of giants, and had an iron

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bedstead nine cubits in length: his kingdom derived its name from the lofty hill of Bashan, and contained no less than sixty walled towns, beside villages. Og is said to have espoused the cause of Sihon, in opposing the progress of Moses and his people; but he was slain in the contest, and his whole kingdom was transferred to the children of Israel.

The news of what Moses had done to these confederate kings on the other side Jordan astonished the Canaanites of every denomination; but when they also heard, that the waters of the river had been divided to facilitate the passage of the conquerors, their surprise was converted into terror and consternation. Jericho was the first place that felt the fury of the impending storm. It was dismantled by the shouts of the Israelites, the sound of rams horns, and the carrying the ark of the covenant round the walls. Not a single inhabitant was spared but the family of Rahab, who had concealed the spies sent by Joshua into the city: the buildings were all reduced to ashes, and a curse denounced against the man, who should attempt to raise others upon the same foundation.

The tidings of such rapid and important conquests alarmed the little state of Ai, whose king is said to have gained some trifling advantage in his first skirmish with Joshua. That general, however, formed a stratagem, by which the city of Ai was speedily reduced to a heap of ruins; the inhabitants slaughtered, to the number of twelve thousand souls; and the king himself suspended from a tree and afterward buried in one of the gates, beneath a heap of stones. B. C. 1451.



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In order to avert the impending destruction, which now began to threaten all the neighbouring kingdoms, the inhabitants of Gibeon, a city of the Hivites, sent ambassadors to Joshua, who, arriving at his camp in Gilgal, with old tattered garments, clouted shoes, and a quantity of mouldy bread, assured the Israelites, that they had come from a far country to solicit an amicable alliance; and acted their parts with such address, that Joshua, inconsiderately, made a league with them. At the expiration of three days the artifice was discovered, but the Israelites had already engaged to protect them as friends: they were, however, condemned to be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the people they had so subtilely deceived.

Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, resolving to make an example of the Gibeonites, who had so tamely surrendered their liberties, called in the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, to assist him in besieging the city of Gibeon. The inhabitants, in this distress, applied for succour to Joshua, who immediately came, and obliged the royal confederates to retire with the utmost precipitation. As they were fleeing, and had nearly reached Beth-Horon, there fell a dreadful storm of hail, which did more execution than the arms of the Israelites. Thus persecuted by the heavens above, and pressed by Joshua in the rear, they fled as chance directed them. In so general a dispersion great numbers of them would, in all probability, have escaped; had not the sun stopped his career at Joshua's command, that the Israelites might see to overtake and destroy their enemies. The five kings found a temporary asylum in a cave near the city of Makkedah; but,

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being discovered, they were soon dragged out; exposed to various indignities; and put to death.

Jabin, king of Azor, receiving intelligence of this catastrophe, resolved to raise all the tribes of the Canaanites to resist the common enemy, and actually assembled an army for that purpose, which is said to have been "like the sand on the seashore for numbers." But these confederates, being attacked by surprise while they were encamped near the waters of Meron, were driven from their camp, and pursued with great slaughter.

Notwithstanding their numerous losses and misfortunes, the Canaanites still retained their spirits, and kept Joshua employed for the space of six years, at the expiration of which great numbers are supposed to have emigrated into foreign countries.

After they had been repeatedly defeated and reduced, the Anakim, a barbarous race who inhabited the mountainous part of the country, were invaded and cut off, and thus the Israelites acquired, by degrees, the possession of the greatest part of Canaan. But still the Canaanites of several denominations were very powerful, and, during the remainder of Joshua's life, were but little molested, as the conquerors were engaged in the important business of dividing their new territories.

Subsequent to this division they were again invaded on all sides by the children of Israel. The tribes of Simeon and Judah marched against the Canaanites and Perizzites, slew ten thousand men in the field, and pursued the fugitives to the city of Bezek, the residence of king Adonibezek, who was infamous for his

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singular insolence and inhumanity; for by his own confession he caused seventy monarchs, whom he had taken captive, to be deprived of their thumbs and great toes, and obliged them to receive their allowance of food, like dogs, beneath his table. His city was now taken by assault, and all the inhabitants put to death. The king himself escaped, but being overtaken in his flight, his thumbs and great toes were cut off, as a just reward for his former cruelty.

Shortly after this expedition the Canaanites were invaded in several other parts. Those who dwelt in the mountains were easily reduced, but those who occupied the low country were able to make a long and vigorous resistance, being furnished with chariots of iron. In the course of this war Hebron fell into the hands of Caleb, who drove thence the three sons of Anak.

Some vigorous attempts were also made by the other tribes against the cities that had fallen to their lot, but the adverse party maintained their ground with such firmness and resolution, that, after all their calamities, they were but little inferior to the Israelites, nor had one tribe of them been extirpated, except the Girgasites.

The Canaanites, the Hivites of mount Lebanon, and the Sidonians, were left to prove the sacred people, by exercising them with temptation to idolatry: and the other devoted nations, living as it were in common with the Israelites, soon persuaded them to intermarry with them, and serve their gods.

[redacted] In consequence of their artifices, Israel incurred the heavy displeasure of the Almighty, who employed a second Jabin as the instrument of his wrath. This prince re-

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duced the Jews to the most abject state of slavery, and oppressed them with the utmost rigour for the space of twenty years. At the expiration of that time they revolted, and proved so successful in their attempt for the recovery of their liberty, that they routed Jabin's army, and pursued Sisera (who had the command of nine hundred chariots of iron) to the gates of Harosheth of the Gentiles. That general, fearing to be made prisoner, quitted his chariot, and directed his steps with all possible speed to the tent of Heber the Kenite, where he was received by Jael, Heber's wife, with every token of respect and amity. Having refreshed himself with a bowl of milk, and requested his hostess to keep watch at the tent door lest his enemies should discover him, he fell into a deep sleep. Jael immediately seized the opportunity of driving a nail into his temples, and thus deprived him of life. Barak, the commander of Israel, came to the tent in quest of the fugitive, and found that he had perished by the hand of a woman; in consequence of which Jabin's oppression was set aside, and the Israelites obtained a respite for the term of forty years.

After this battle the history of the Canaanites is very obscure, and unsatisfactory, till the reign of David, when that monarch invaded the city of Jerusalem. The Jebusites, who held the fortress of Zion, are said to have posted their lame and blind to defend it, saying, they were sufficient to keep off so contemptible an enemy: but David soon convinced them of their error, and carried the place by storm. About the same time they were invaded B. C. 1047

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in Gezer, by the king of Egypt, and reduced to the utmost extremities.

Thus oppressed by Israel on the one hand, and assaulted by the powerful armies of Pharaoh on the other, the remnant of the Amorites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Jebusites, were, in the days of Solomon, sunk to so wretched a situation, that they were unable to answer the demand of a tribute, and are therefore supposed to have been employed in the most laborious and servile works by the Jews, who reckoned them of a more ignoble birth than themselves. It is however necessary to remark, that the Canaanites, properly so called, were not subject to the yoke of Solomon, but, remaining free in their possessions on the seacoast, gradually rose to a great height of fame and prosperity under the appellation of Phœnicians.

## SECT. II.

### *The History of the Philistines.*

IT has been already observed, that this people descended partly from the Casluhim, and partly from the Caphtorim, the posterity of Mizraim. Moses affirms, that they drove out the Avim or Avites, even to Gaza, and took possession of the country which was the chief, if not the best, part of the Land of Promise.

Their most ancient form of government was administered by kings, all of whom were honoured

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with the appellation of Abimelech. In the days of Moses this monarchy was changed into an aristocracy of five lords; but the supreme authority was again vested in the hands of a king, though it is uncertain by what means this change was effected. The second race of kings was distinguished by the appellation of Achish. During their best times, the royal residence was at Gath, whence it was removed, first to Askelon, and then to Gaza.

The Philistines appear to have been a warlike and industrious people, and in the days of Abraham were justly famed for the purity and simplicity of their manners; but they gradually degenerated into all the vices of other idolatrous nations, and became the most irreconcileable enemies of the Israelites. They were greatly addicted to trade; entertained a very fond veneration for their deities; and performed their religious ceremonies with much pomp and magnificence. Their language appears to have been easily understood by the Hebrews; and they had, doubtless, the arts and sciences in common with the most ingenious of their contemporaries. The invention of the bow and arrow is ascribed to this people.

Abimelech their king, in Abraham's time, was a wise and equitable person, and seems to have had some intercourse with God. He resided at Gerar, where he became enamoured of Abraham's wife, and, understanding she was a single woman, resolved to take her to his bed; but being warned by the Almighty, in a dream, to restore the object of his love to her concealed husband, he called Abraham into his presence, rebuked him for his duplicity and want of confidence, and presented him B. C. 1897.

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with a considerable number of sheep, oxen, and servants, giving him free permission at the same time to settle in any part of his dominions.

Abimelech the second reigned also at Gerar, and had almost the same transaction with Isaac and Rebecca, as his father had with Abraham and Sarah. He seems to have been actuated by the very same principles as his righteous predecessor, and certainly merited the epithet of a just and righteous prince. Isaac continued without molestation in the land till his increasing power began to give umbrage to the Philistines, who gave him no small disturbance, by filling up his wells as fast as his servants dug them, and by various other ill offices. He was then compelled to remove from place to place, till at length Abimelech renewed the covenant, that had subsisted between his father and Abraham.

Nothing further worthy of notice is recorded of these people, till after the decease of Joshua, when they were dispossessed of Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron, by the united tribes of Simeon and Judah, which however they soon recovered, but whether by gift or conquest is uncertain.

B. C. 1305. About one hundred and twenty years after the reduction of these cities, the Philistines oppressed the children of Israel, and retained them in subjection till their delivery was effected by the valour of Shamgar, who is said to have killed six hundred men with an ox goad. A second time they oppressed the Israelites, in conjunction with the Ammonites, in the days of Jepthah: and a third time they reduced them, by the permission of God, and held them in subjection for the space of forty years.

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In this interval, Samson was born to check the pride of the Philistines. He fell in love with a damsel who resided at Timnath, and, at the celebration of his marriage, proposed a riddle to thirty young Philistines, promising to give a suit of apparel to each man, if within seven days they should explain it. For three successive days they puzzled themselves with the solution of his enigma; but finding themselves totally at a loss, and knowing that Samson would demand thirty changes of apparel from them, if they could not resolve it, they threatened their countrywoman, Samson's bride, with the most dreadful effects of their fury, if she did not extricate them from their trouble. She accordingly wearied her husband by continual entreaties, till at length she prevailed on him to disclose the ambiguity, which she communicated to her guests. This transaction proved a misfortune to Askelon, as Samson went thither and slew thirty men, whose garments he carried home to fulfil his engagement. B. C. 1137.

This marriage was productive of many misfortunes to the Philistines; for Samson's father-in-law, apprehending that his daughter was not possessed of the Israelite's heart, gave her to another, and denied Samson, who had been absent a twelvemonth, all access to his wife; but at the same time offered him another daughter, whom he highly extolled for her youth and personal accomplishments. But this proposal did not pacify Samson, who, in revenge, sent three hundred foxes with fire-brands at their tails into the fields, so that the standing corn was consumed, together with all the other fruits of the earth. The Philistines, confounded at so unexpected a disaster, and understanding the cause of Samson's B. C. 1136.



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anger, looked on his father-in-law as the chief incendiary, and therefore burnt him, together with his daughter.

Many of them were afterward smitten by Samson, whom they pursued to the rock Etam, and received, bound, from the men of Judah. The Philistines shouted aloud at sight of their enemy, but their joy was soon converted into mourning, for Samson, breaking his bonds, found the jaw-bone of an ass, and with that weapon killed a thousand of his adversaries.

At the expiration of twenty years the Gazites thought they had this formidable enemy within their power, and fastened their gates, with an intention to put him to death in the morning. But their precaution was frustrated by Samson, who, quitting his lodging at midnight, took the city gates, with their posts and bars, and carried them away to Hebron. He was however at length subdued through the treachery of his mistress Delilah, who consented to deliver him to the lords of the Philistines for a considerable sum of money.

Samson, thus betrayed through his own folly and incontinence, was deprived of his sight, bound in fetters of brass, and compelled to grind in the prison at Gaza: but, in consequence of his repentance and earnest prayer to God, he was finally enabled to revenge himself in the most ample manner, by overturning the temple of Dagon, and crushing three thousand persons beneath the ruins.

Soon after this extraordinary event the Philistines obtained a signal victory over Israel, and took the ark of God, after having slain the two priests who attended it: but experiencing some severe afflictions while they retained it in their

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possession, they sent it back again to the Israelites, and appear to have been thoroughly sensible of the hand that chastised them. They soon, however, forgot this manifestation of the divine anger; for about twenty years after, they marched against the chosen people who were assembled at Mizpeh, but they were dispersed by so dreadful a storm of thunder and lightning, that the Israelites pursued them with great slaughter as far as Beth-Car, and emancipated themselves from their tyrannical yoke.

The Philistines soon recovered this loss, and in a few years became more powerful than ever; for being informed that one of their fortresses had been surprised by Jonathan the son of Saul, they assembled thirty thousand chariots of war, six thousand horse, and an incredible number of foot soldiers, to fight with the Israelites, who were at this time destitute of arms, through the political precautions of their tyrannical oppressors. B. C. 1096.

In the midst of their cruel depredations they received a check from Jonathan, who, inspired by a divine impulse, and accompanied by his armour-bearer, made a considerable slaughter of one of their out guards; the noise of which spreading to the whole body, occasioned so universal a tumult, that they fell upon each other with great fury, and the earth is expressly said to have shaken beneath them. The Israelites perceiving this confusion, sallied out against them under the command of Saul, and pursued them with unremitting slaughter from Michmash to Ajalon. B. C. 1095.

Notwithstanding this misfortune, visibly effected by the hand of Heaven, they recovered

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their former spirit in a few years, and resolved once more to try the strength of the Israelites in arms. They accordingly pitched their tents on an eminence in front of the Jewish camp, and sent a giant, one Goliath of Gath, to challenge any individual of their enemies to single combat. He presented himself before the intimidated tribes for forty days successively, without receiving any answer to his proposals, or his menaces; but at last he was attacked and slain by David, who at that time was a ruddy youth, and used no other weapons than a sling and a smooth stone chosen from a brook. The haughty Philistine no sooner fell, than David severed his head from his body, and carried it off in triumph, while the Philistines fled with the utmost precipitation, and were pursued with great slaughter to the gates of their own cities, Gath and Ekron.

Soon after this event they were overthrown in battle by David, and some great change seems to have been effected in their government, for about this time the Scripture speaks of a king whose name was Achish, and who resided at Gath. David, being compelled by the urgency of his affairs to seek an asylum in Gath, was brought before this monarch; but he, supposing from his behaviour that he was insane, would take no further notice of him than to command, that he should no more be brought into his presence.

B. C. 1060. Achish, the son of Maoch, afterward received David and all his followers into his protection; allotted him Ziglag for his particular dwelling; and proposed to entrust him with an honourable command in the army: but this design was overruled by the lords of the Philistines.

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Achish and the Philistines now marched against Saul, who was encamped on mount Gilboa, and after a sanguinary contest, obtained a complete victory. They drove the Israelites before them with great slaughter; put Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, to death: and pursued closely after Saul, but he fell by his own sword before they overtook him. This conquest put them in possession of a great part of the enemy's country.

On David's accession to the throne of his deceased rival, the Philistines did not offer to disturb him, but the irreconcileable enmity which subsisted between the nations soon produced other wars, all of which terminated in favour of the Israelites. The Philistines now were made tributary to David, and are supposed to have applied themselves to commerce and the arts of peace.

Many years after this period they were harassed by Nadab, king of Israel, who besieged them in the city of Gibbethon, which was again invested by Elah, king of Israel, some years afterward; but they resisted the efforts of both these princes with equal intrepidity and success. B. C. 953.

They are said to have courted the favour of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, by a voluntary payment of their tribute, which had been for some time neglected: but in the reign of his son Jehoram they rose in open rebellion, broke into his kingdom, plundered the royal treasury, and exterminated all his family except Athaliah and her son Ahaziah, who had the good fortune to escape their fury. This extraordinary success was probably owing to the assistance they received from the Arabians, who at the same period made



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war upon the Israelites; but they were soon afterward recompensed by Uzziah, king of Judah, who dismantled Ashdod, Gath, and Jabneh, and built several strong cities among them to keep them in subjection.

B. C. 740. They are supposed to have remained peaceable under the government of Uzziah and Jotham: but in the reign of Ahaz they revolted, and warred against Judah with such success, that they added a considerable portion of country to their ancient territories. This acquisition was soon wrested from them by Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz; and, to add to their misfortunes, they were at the same time attacked by the Assyrians, who besieged their city Ashdod, and finally deprived them of their liberty. From this period they were tributary to the great monarchies as they succeeded each other, till their total destruction accomplished the animated predictions of the prophet Zephaniah. "Gaza shall be forsaken, and Askelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. Wo unto the inhabitants of the seacoasts, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you: O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant; and the seacoasts shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks."

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# CHAP. I.

## THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS FROM THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAM TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, INCLUDING THE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE.

THIS rich and beautiful tract of country was first called the Land of Canaan, from Noah's grand-son, by whom it was peopled: but in later ages it has been distinguished by other appellations; such as the Land of Promise, the Land of God, the Holy Land,* Palestine,† Judea, and the Land of Israel.

It was bounded on the west by the Mediterranean; on the east by the lake Asphaltites, the river Jordan, the Samachonite lake, and the sea of Tiberias; on the north by the mountains of Antilibanus, or the province of Phœnicia; and on the south by Edom or Idumea.‡ Its extent,

* The Jews have dignified this country with the title of Holy Land on account of its metropolis, which was regarded as the centre of God's worship, and his peculiar habitation: and Christian writers have deemed it worthy of the same honour, as being the scene on which the coequal Son of God accomplished the great work of redemption.

† It was called Palestine from the Palestines or Philistines, who possessed a considerable share of it: and Judea, from the tribe of Judah, who inhabited the finest part of the whole. At present it is generally distinguished by the name of Palestine.

‡ It is necessary to observe, that this description is confined to the part which is properly called "the Land of Promise;" the boundaries of that part which belonged to two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan, called Peræa, and of the kingdoms of Sihon, Og, &c.

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according to the most accurate maps, appears to have been 200 miles in length, and about 80 in breadth at the widest part. It reached from 31 deg. 30 min. to 33 deg. 20 min. of north latitude; and from 34 deg. 50 min. to 37 deg. 15 min. of east longitude.

The serenity of the air, the fertility of the soil, and the incomparable excellence of the fruits of Palestine, induced the Jewish lawgiver to describe it, as "a land that flowed with milk and honey; a land of brooks and waters, of fountains that spring out of the hills and valleys; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, pomegranates, figs, and honey; a land where is no lack or scarcity of any thing." Its richness and fecundity have been extolled even by Julian the apostate, and many writers have descanted upon its natural beauties: but, in consequence of the just anger of God, the greater part of it is now reduced into a mere desert, and seems incapable of cultivation.

Subsequent to its conquest by the children of Israel, Judea, in its most extensive sense, was divided into maritime and inland, as well as into champaign and mountainous; and again subdivided in Judea on this side, and Judea beyond Jordan. But the most considerable division was that made by lot among the twelve tribes, for the prevention of murmurs and discontent, when two tribes and a half were seated beyond the river, and the rest on this side. In the reign of king Solomon it was divided into twelve districts, each under a peculiar officer; and, in the time of

are not so easily ascertained, any more than the conquests and acquisitions which they afterward made under the reigns of their most prosperous monarchs.

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his imprudent son Rehoboam, a more fatal division was effected by the revolt of ten tribes, who under the conduct of Jeroboam, established a new monarchy, which they called the kingdom of Israel, in opposition to that of Judah. The Romans divided it into tetrarchies and toparchies; and, after various changes that took place under the northern barbarians, Saracens, &c. the Turks reduced it to a province under the beglerbegate or bashawship of Damascus. It will, however, be proper to give a general description of the country, prior to the history of its successive inhabitants and revolutions.

Of the mountains, so frequently celebrated in the poetic books of Holy Writ, those of Lebanon,* or Libanus, were the highest and most considerable. This famous chain is computed to be about 300 miles in compass, having Mesopotamia on the east, Armenia on the north, Palestine on the south, and the Mediterranean on the west. It consists of four ridges, which rise above each other: the first is extremely fertile in grain and fruit; the second barren and rocky; the third embellished with verdant plants, balsamic herbs, and odoriferous flowers; and the fourth, by reason of its surprising height, is generally covered with snow. Several considerable rivers have their source in these mountains, viz. the Jordan, Rocham, Nahar-Rossian, and Nahar-Cadicha;

* These mountains make a considerable figure in the Jewish history, on account of the prodigious number of cedars, which they afforded for the ornament of Solomon's temple and metropolis. And St. Jerom, speaking of Libanus, says, "it is the highest hill in all the Land of Promise, as well as the most woody and thickset."

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and some others, of a less stream, rush down the heights, and form the most beautiful cascades that ever attracted the admiration of the curious. The western ridge is properly distinguished by the appellation of Libanus, as the eastern is called Antilibanus, and the hollow between Cœlosyria. They are at present inhabited by the Maronites and wild Arabs; and spotted with various edifices, as churches, convents, chapels, grots, &c.

Mount Hermon, the summit of which, like Lebanon, is usually capped with snow, is the next in dignity for height, and was once famed for an ancient temple, much resorted to by the superstitious heathens. It is also celebrated by the royal psalmist for its refreshing dews, which descended on the adjoining mount of Sion: and St. Jerom asserts, that its snow was carried to Tyre and Sidon, to be used in cooling liquors.

Mount Tabor is justly admired for its beauty, regularity, fertility, and central situation, in a large plain, at a distance from any other hill. It enjoys the noblest prospect that can possibly be imagined of many places famed in Scripture; such as the hills of Samaria, and Engadi on the south; those of Hermon and Gilboa, on the east and north-east; and mount Carmel, on the south-west. Some remains of the wall and gates built by Josephus are still visible on the top; and on the eastern side are those of a strong castle; in the cincture of which are three altars in remembrance of the three tabernacles, which St. Peter proposed to erect, at the time of our Lord's transfiguration, on this mountain.

Mount Carmel stands on the skirts of the sea, and is the most remarkable headland on the

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coast. It seems to have derived is name * from its abundant fertility, and is highly venerated both by Jews and Christians, as having been the residence of the prophet Elijah.

Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, is situated at the distance of one mile from Jerusalem, and commands a fine view of the city, from which it is parted by the brook Kedron and the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is not, in reality, a single hill, but part of a long ridge, with four summits extending from north to south; the middlemost of which is that, whence our Saviour ascended into Heaven.

Mount Calvary claims our chief regard, as the scene of our Redeemer's great atonement for his sinful creatures. It stood anciently without the gates of the city, being the place appointed for public executions. But the emperor Adrian, having ordered Jerusalem to be rebuilt a little to the northward of its former situation, enclosed this mountain within the walls. Constantine erected a magnificent church upon it; and it has always been regarded as a place of great veneration by Christians of all denominations.

Mount Gihon stands west of Jerusalem, and at a smaller distance than Calvary, being about two furlongs from the gate of Bethlehem. It was here that Solomon was anointed king by Zadock the priest, and Nathan the prophet. There was also a celebrated pool upon it, from which King Hezekiah brought water, by an aqueduct, into the city. It is still a noble basin, one hundred and

* The word *carmel*, according to the Hebrew import, signifies *the vine of God*, and is constantly used in the prophetic books, to represent any place planted with a profusion of fruit-trees.

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six paces long, and sixty-seven broad, lined with plaster, and well stored with water.

Mount Moriah, the site of the famous temple of Solomon, stands on the south-east of Calvary, having Millo on the west, so called from the filling up of that deep valley, in order to raise it to a level with the rest. It is commonly supposed, that Abraham was commanded to offer his beloved son Isaac as a burnt sacrifice to God upon this mountain. This article of the mountains may be concluded with observing, that those in the kingdom of Judah mostly stand southward, towards the land of Edom; but those of the kingdom of Israel are interspersed within the country.

The most celebrated of the valleys were, Berakhah, in the tribe of Judah, on the west side of the lake of Sodom; siddim, famed for the overthrow of Chedorlaomer; Shaveh, or the royal valley, where the king of Sodom met Abraham after the defeat of the confederates; the vale of Salt, celebrated for the overthrow of the Edomites by David and Amaziah; Jezreel, the scene of Jezebel's untimely end; Mamre, so called from the name of its owner, and from the oak under which Abraham entertained the three celestial visitors; Rephaim, the vale of the Titans and giants; Jehoshaphat, so called from the victory there obtained by a monarch of that name; Hinnom, anciently defiled by many barbarous rites and superstitions; Zeboim, which received its apellation from one of the four cities that perished with Sodom near the Dead Sea; Achor, where Achan was put to death by the Israelitish host for his sacrilege; Bochim, so denominated from the universal mourning, which the Israelites made

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there on account of the dreadful message they received from God for their disobedience; and the valley of Elah, famous for the defeat of Goliath and the Philistines, by David, and his royal patron Saul.

There were likewise several noted plains in Palestine, viz. the great plain, through which the river Jordan runs; the plain of Jezreel, which extended from Scythopolis to mount Carmel; Sharon, where the Gadites are supposed to have fed their numerous flocks and herds; Sephelah, which extended westward and southward of Eleutheropolis; Jericho, much celebrated for its palm-trees, balm, shrub, and rose-trees; and others too numerous to admit of mention.

Many deserts and wildernesses of this country are mentioned in the sacred history, which are not, however, to be understood of places quite barren or uninhabited; for several of them contained cities and villages. The word, therefore, commonly meant no more than a tract that bore neither corn, wine, nor oil, but was left to the spontaneous productions of nature. The most noted of these deserts were Arnon, in which the river of that name runs through the land of Gilead; Ziph, where David sought an asylum from persecution; Cadesh, near Cadesh-Barneah, on the south side of Judah, mentioned as the place where Moses and Aaron were chastised for smiting the rock; Mahon, on the south of Jeshimon; Tekoah, Bezer, Gibeon, and several others.

Among the woods or forests mentioned in Scripture, were those of Hareth, whither David withdrew from Saul; Ephraim, where Absalom received the just reward of his rebellion; Lebanon,



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where Solomon built a magnificent palace; and Bethel, whence the she bears came and devoured the children who insulted the Prophet Elisha.

Of the seas there are commonly reckoned five, viz. the Mediterranean, the Dead sea, the sea of Tiberias, the Samochonite sea, or lake, and the sea of Jazer. The first of these has been frequently described by travellers: the second, called by some authors the Asphaltite lake, is so impregnated with salt, that those who dive beneath its surface are immediately covered with a kind of brine; and vast quantities of bitumen are thrown, by its waves, upon the shore: the third is highly commended by Josephus for the sweetness and coolness of its water, and variety of excellent fish: the fourth is famed only for the thickness of its water, from which it is supposed to have derived its name: and the fifth is no other than a small lake in the vicinity of the city Jazer.

The Jordan is the most considerable of the rivers, and indeed the only stream that merits the name; as the Arnon, Jabbok, Chereth, Sorek, Kishon, Bosor, &c. are but brooks or rivulets in comparison of this, or the Euphrates. It has its source at the famous lake of Phiala, about ten miles north of that of Samochon; its course is mostly southward, inclining a few degrees towards the west; its breadth has been compared to that of the Thames at Windsor; its depth is said to be three yards at the very brink; its rapidity considerable; and the scenery of its banks varied, according to the places which it intersects. In ancient times, it overflowed about the season of the early harvest, or soon after Easter; but it is no longer subject to this inun-

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dation. The plain on both sides, from the sea of Tiberias, to the Asphaltite lake, is extremely arid and unwholesome during the heat of summer, and every-where steril, except that part which lies contiguous to the river.

Among the most remarkable curiosities of Palestine may be justly reckoned various petrifactions in the neighbourhood of mount Carmel, which bear the most exact resemblance to citrons, melons, olives, peaches, and other vegetable productions. Here are also found a kind of oysters, and bunches of grapes of the same consistence. Small round stones, resembling peas, have been frequently seen on a spot of ground near Rachel's tomb, not far from Bethlehem. On the same road is a fountain, honoured with the name of "Apostle's Fountain;" and a little further is a barren, rugged, and dismal solitude, to which our Saviour retired, and was tempted by the Devil. In this desert appears a steep and craggy mountain, on the summit of which are two chapels. There are also several gloomy caverns in the neighbourhood, formerly the solitary retreat of Christian anchorets.

Under this class must also be ranked the hot and medicinal waters of Palestine; the saline efflorescences observed at the distance of a few leagues from the Dead sea; and the celebrated fruit, called by the Arabs, zachone, which grows on a kind of thorny bush, and resembles a small unripe walnut.

Among the artificial rarities may be considered the ruins of Ptolemais,* or St. John d'Acre

* This city had two walls well flanked with towers and other bulwarks; and each wall had a ditch lined with stone.

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which still retain many vestiges of ancient magnificence; such as the remains of a noble Gothic cathedral, formerly dedicated to St. Andrew; the church of St. John, the titular saint of the city; the convents of the knights hospitallers; and the palace of their grand master. The remains of Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, though long ago laid in ruins, and great part of it turned into arable land, exhibit some marks of those sumptuous edifices, with which it was adorned by king Herod. Towards the north side is a large square piazza, encompassed with marble pillars, together with the fragments of strong walls at some distance. But the most remarkable object is a church, said to have been built by the empress Helena over the place where St. John the Baptist was beheaded, the dome of which, together with some beautiful columns, capitals, and mosaic work, prove it to have been a noble fabric.

Jacob's well is highly venerated by Christian travellers, on account of its antiquity, and of our Redeemer's conference with the woman of Samaria. It is hewn out of the solid rock, about thirty-five yards in depth, and three in diameter, and is at present covered with a stone vault.

The pools of Solomon, supposed to have been made by order of that monarch for the supply of his palaces, gardens, and even the metropolis it-

But now those works are overthrown, and their fragments appear like a succession of huge rocks. About half a mile east of the town is a curious pyramidal hill, so improved by art, that its steepness renders it altogether inaccessible, except on the south-west side. On this eminence the bashaw commonly pitches his pavilion, when he takes this town in his circuit.

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self, still appear to have been a work of immense cost and labour. Such are also the sealed fountains immediately opposite. These pools are three in a row, one over the other, and disposed in such a manner that the water of the uppermost may fall into the second, and from the second into the third. They are all quadrangular, and of an equal breadth, viz. about ninety paces; but in length they differ, the first being one hundred and sixty paces, the second two hundred, and the third two hundred and twenty: they are all of a considerable depth, walled and plastered, and contain a large quantity of water. At the distance of one hundred and twenty paces is the spring which supplies them. The aqueduct is built on a foundation of stones, and the water runs in earthen pipes about ten inches in diameter. This work anciently extended several leagues, but at present there are only some fragments of it to be found. The gardens of Solomon have also been long destroyed, and the ground is said to appear almost incapable of cultivation.

The famous pools of Gihon and Bethesda may be ranked among the most stately ruins; the former is situated about a quarter of a mile from Bethlehem-gate westward: its length is a hundred and six paces, and its breadth sixty-seven. It is lined with wall and plaster, and contains a considerable store of water. The other, at Jerusalem, is one hundred and twenty paces long, forty broad, and eight deep; but at present dry.

In the city of Bethlehem they pretend to show the stable and manger where the adorable Messiah lay at the period of his nativity; and exhibit a grotto hewn out of a chalky rock, in which they



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affirm the blessed virgin concealed herself and holy child from the persecution of Herod.

At Nazareth is a magnificent church under ground, said to occupy the very cave where the Virgin Mary received the angel's salutation, and where two beautiful pillars of granite are erected in commemoration of that interesting event. At a small distance are some fine remains of a larger church, supposed to have been erected in the time of the empress Helena. But this is much inferior to the great church built over our Saviour's sepulchre by the same empress, and called the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The last class of artificial curiosities worthy of notice is that of the sepulchral monuments, which are scattered all over the country; and of which the most remarkable are selected for the reader's gratification.

The tomb of the holy virgin, situated near Jerusalem, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, to which there is a descent by a magnificent flight of steps, has on the right hand side the sepulchre of St. Anna the mother, and on the left, that of Joseph the husband of Mary. In each division are altars for the celebration of divine worship; and the whole is cut out of the solid rock.

The monument of king Jehoshaphat is divided into several apartments; one of which contains his tomb, adorned with a stately portico and entablature. That of Absalom, two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, is about twenty cubits square, adorned below with four columns of the Ionic order, with their capitals, and entablatures to each front. From the height of twenty to forty feet it is somewhat less, and quite plain, excepting a small fillet at the upper end; and from forty to

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the top it changes into a round, which tapers gradually to a point, the whole cut out of the solid rock.

A little further westward is the tomb of Zechariah, the son of Barrachiah, who is said to have been slain by the Jews between the temple and the altar. This structure is all cut out of the natural rock. It is eighteen feet high, as many square, and adorned with Ionic columns.

But the most curious and magnificent pieces of antiquity of this kind are the royal sepulchres without the walls of Jerusalem: they are all hewn out of the solid marble rock, and contain several spacious and elaborate apartments. On the eastern side is the entrance leading to a stately court, about one hundred and twenty feet square, neatly wrought and polished. On the south side of it is a sumptuous portico, embellished in front with a kind of architrave, and supported by columns; and on the left of the portico is a descent into the sepulchral apartments.

The first of these is a handsome room, about twenty-four feet square, formed with such neatness and accuracy, that it may justly be styled a beautiful chamber, hollowed out of one piece of marble. From this room are three passages leading to other chambers of a similar fabric, but of different dimensions; in each of which (the first excepted) are stone coffins placed in niches, that were once covered with semicircular lids, embellished with flowers, garlands, &c. but now broken to pieces. The doorcases, hinges, pivots, &c. are all of the same stone with the other parts of these rooms, and even the doors appear to have been cut out of the very piece to which they hang. Why these grots are honoured with the appellation

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of the sepulchres of the kings is not exactly known, but whoever views them with any degree of attention must be induced to pronounce them a royal work, and to regard them as the most authentic remains of the old regal splendour, that are to be met with in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

Subsequent to this *general* description of Palestine, it may be proper to give a concise account of the several lots and countries assigned to the Israelites, beginning with those of the two tribes and a half, seated beyond Jordan; proceeding to the nine and a half on this side, styled more properly the Holy Land; and concluding with a topical description of the contiguous countries, the history of the inhabitants of which, who either mingled with, or bordered upon the Jews, has been already given in the preceding chapters.

The kings of Bashan and of the Amorites being vanquished by the children of Israel, their territories were settled by the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, with half of Manasseh. Reuben, who was the eldest, had the southern part of the new conquest, extending from the north-east coasts of the Asphaltite lake along the eastern banks of the river Jordan; divided on the south from Midian by the Arnon; on the north from the tribe of Gad, by another little river; and bordered on the east partly by the Moabites, and partly by the Ammonites; while the Jordan parted it on the west from "The Land of Promise." It exhibited three famous mountains, viz. Peor, Nebo, and Pisgah, and was every-where extremely fertile in corn, wine, fruit, and pasturage.

To the north of Reuben was fixed the tribe of Gad, having likewise the river Jordan on the

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west, the Ammonites on the east, and the half tribe of Manasseh on the north. This tract of country, like the former, was famed for its rich pastures and exuberant productions.

The portion allotted to the half tribe of Manasseh was bounded on the south by that of Gad; on the west by the Jordan and Samochonite lake; on the east by the hills of Bashan and Hermon; and on the north by a part of Lebanon. Its extent was almost equal to the other two, and it was afterwards more properly called Upper Galilee, or the Galilee of the Gentiles.

On this side of the Jordan, and on the furthest northern verge of Judea, lay the province of Lower Galilee, occupied by the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, and Issachar. It produced an abundance of corn, oil, wine, and fruits of various sorts; and was, in its flourishing condition, so full of towns and villages, that Josephus observes, the least of them contained fifteen thousand inhabitants.

The tribe of Asher was seated on the north-west corner of the province, having the Mediterranean on the west, Zebulun on the south, and Naphtali on the east. Its fecundity, and the excellence of its productions, fully answered the blessing which dying Jacob, gave it: "that the bread of it should be fat, and that it should yield royal dainties."

Naphtali possessed a tract of country between that of Asher and the river Jordan. It was exceedingly fertile, and extended along the western bank of the river from Mount Lebanon to the sea of Tiberias.

To the south of Asher and Naphtali was seated the tribe of Zebulun, having the Mediterranean

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on the west, the sea of Galilee on the east, the river Jephthael on the north, and that of Kishon on the south; and by its vicinity to the sea, its numerous ports, and extensive commerce, it perfectly verified the blessings given to Zebulun both by Jacob and Moses.

The possessions of Issachar were bounded by the Jordan in the east, by Zebulun on the north, by the Mediterranean on the west, and by the other half of Manasseh on the south. Its most remarkable places were the Mounts Carmel and Gilboa, the valley of Jezreel, and the great plain of Megiddo.

On the south of Zebulun lay the other half tribe of Manasseh, and south of this was the territory of Ephraim, distinguished in later times by the name of Samaria. These tracts of country, though contiguous to each other, varied considerably, some parts being mountainous, rocky, and steril, while others were pleasant, fertile, and populous. That portion which appertained to Manasseh was bordered on the north and south by Issachar and Ephraim, and on the east and west by the Jordan and the Mediterranean. It was agreeably diversified with mountains, plains, and valleys, and contained a considerable number of stately cities.

The tribe of Ephraim occupied the south side of Samaria, and extended, like that of Manasseh, from the Mediterranean to the river Jordan. The low lands were extremely rich and luxuriant; the hills afforded excellent pasture, and even the rocks were prettily feathered with trees. The towns and cities were numerous, and the population considerable.

Judea, properly so called, was situated on the

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most southern side of the whole, having Samaria on the north, the Mediterranean on the west, Egypt and Idumea on the south, and the Jordan and Dead sea on the east. The climate was warm, but well refreshed with cooling winds; and the face of the country exhibited the most beautiful assemblage of verdant mountains, irriguous plains, fruitful hills, enamelled valleys, and crystal rivulets; while a rich profusion of corn, wine, and oil, evinced the natural fecundity of the soil.

This canton was inhabited by the tribes of Benjamin, Judah, Dan, and Simeon: the first of which lay contiguous to Judah on the south, to Samaria on the north, and to Dan on the west. It contained but few towns and cities; but this want was amply compensated by the possession of the city of Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish worship, the seat of the monarchs and pontiffs, and the great metropolis of the Holy Land.

Jerusalem was formerly divided into four parts, each enclosed with separate walls, viz. The old city of Jebus, situated on Mount Zion, where David and his successors resided; the lower city, embellished with some magnificent palaces and citadels, by Solomon, Antiochus, and Herod; the new city, chiefly inhabited by merchants, tradesmen, and artificers; and Mount Moriah, which, supported the sumptuous temple of Solomon,* destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, rebuilt by the Jews on their return from the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards renewed, adorned, and enriched by Herod.

* For a satisfactory description of this incomparable building, see the vi and vii chapters of the First Book of Kings.

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This once rich and stately metropolis is at present reduced to a thinly inhabited town, of about three miles in circumference. It stands in 31 deg. 46 min. of north latitude, and 35 deg. 34 min. of east longitude, on a rocky eminence, surrounded on all sides except the north, with steep ascents and deep valleys below; and these again environed with other hills at a distance. The soil in some places produces corn, wine, and oil; but the greater part, for want of cultivation, is become stony, sandy, and barren. Subsequent to its total destruction by Vespasian, the emperor Adrian built a new city almost upon the site of the old town, and adorned it with several noble edifices, but in the time of Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, it was found in so ruinous and forlorn a condition as raised her pity into a noble zeal of restoring it to its ancient grandeur.

With this design she caused all the rubbish to be removed from Mount Calvary, and ordered a magnificent church to be built there, to comprehend as many of the scenes of our Redeemer's sufferings as could be conveniently enclosed within one edifice. The walls are of stone, and the roof of cedar: the east end includes Mount Calvary, and the west contains the holy sepulchre. The former is covered with a handsome cupola, supported by sixteen massive columns, formerly incrusted with marble. The centre is open on the top just over the sepulchre; and above the high altar, at the east end, is another stately dome. The nave of the church forms the choir, and in the interior aisles are the places where the most remarkable circumstances of our Saviour's passion were transacted; together with the tombs of Godfrey and Baldwin, the first two Christian kings of Jerusa-

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lem. An ascent of twenty-two steps leads to a chapel, where that part of Calvary is shown on which the Messiah was crucified. The altar is adorned with three crosses, and other costly embellishments, among which are forty-six silver lamps that are kept constantly burning. Contiguous to this is another small chapel fronting the body of the church. At the west end is the chapel of the sepulchre, hewn out of the solid rock, and ornamented with pillars of porphyry. The cloister round the sepulchre is divided into several chapels for the use of the different Christian sects who reside there; and on the north-west are the apartments of the Latins, who have the care of the church.

It may be proper to mention here an edifice erected on Mount Moriah, called Solomon's temple, though it is not easy to guess when or by whom it was built. The entrance is at the east end, under an octagon, adorned with a cupola and lantern; and towards the west is a straight aisle like that of a church, the whole surrounded with a spacious court, and walled on every side. In the midst of it is erected a Turkish mosque, remarkable neither for its structure nor magnitude, but which makes a stately figure by its advantageous situation. Dr. Pococke, who took a particular view of the edifice, has highly extolled the beauty of the prospect, as well as the materials and workmanship. The colonnades are said to be of the Corinthian order, with arches turned over them; being, in all probability, the porticoes leading to the interior of the building: but the place is held in such veneration by the Turks, that a stranger cannot approach it without danger of forfeiting his life or religion.



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The city is at present under the government of a sangiac, whose tyranny keeps the christian inhabitants so poor, that their chief support and trade consist in providing strangers with accommodations, and selling them beads, relics, &c. for which they are compelled to pay considerable sums to the sangiac and his officers.

The canton of the tribe of Judah was bounded on the east by the Asphaltite lake, and on the west by the tribes of Dan and Simeon. It was reckoned the largest * and most populous of the Jewish territories, and the inhabitants were the most valiant. The land was charmingly diversified with hills and dales, meadows, lakes, and fountains; and exclusive of that part which lay contiguous to Idumea, it produced an exuberant supply of fruits, corn, oil, and wine. It was probably in Judah that the Canaanites resided, and it was here likewise that Abraham and his descendants sojourned, previous to their removal into Egypt.

The lot of Dan was bounded on the north by Ephraim, on the west by the Philistines and the Mediterranean, on the south by Simeon, and on the east by Judah and Benjamin. Its greatest length, from north to south, did not exceed forty miles; and the whole tract was rather narrow; but what it wanted in room was fully compensated by the richness of the soil, and the valour and industry of its inhabitants, some of whom penetrated to the utmost verge of Palestine on the north in quest of new settlements. Here was the famous valley, Nahal-Escol, from which the Israel-

* Judah was the chief and royal tribe, from which the kingdom was denominated.

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itish spies brought Moses such noble specimens of the fertility of the land. Among the most considerable cities of this part was Joppa, now Jaffa, the only port which the Jews had on the Mediterranean. It was seated on a high hill, which commanded a fine prospect of a fertile country on one side, and of the sea on the other. This city suffered so severely during the holy war, that scarcely any of its buildings were left standing, except two old castles. It is now rebuilt towards the sea, with storehouses, and is possessed of a considerable trade. On the western side of the haven is a copious spring, which yields an excellent supply to the inhabitants, and an acceptable refreshment to travellers.

The tribe of Simeon was confined to a very small territory in the most southern corner of Judea, bounded by Dan on the north, by the little river Sichor on the south, by Judah on the east, and by a small neck of land towards the Mediterranean on the west. The greatest part of it was sandy, barren, and mountainous; and the inhabitants were so harassed by the Idumeans on one side, and the Philistines on the other, that they were necessitated to seek their fortune among other tribes. Some hired themselves out to assist their brethren in the conquest of their lots, and others dispersed themselves among every tribe, where they served as scribes, notaries, &c. so fully was Jacob's curse verified on them, as well as on the tribe of Levi, on account of their cruel massacre of the Shechemites: "Cursed (said the patriarch) be their anger, for it was fierce; and their revenge, for it was inhuman: I will *disperse* them in Jacob, and *scatter* them in Israel."

Having thus completed the purposed descrip-

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tion of the lots of the twelve tribes, it will be proper to speak of the five Philistine satrapies, prelusive to the geography of those nations which bordered on the Israelitish provinces.

These satrapies, viz. Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, Ascalon, and Gaza, were situated along the Mediterranean coast; and extended from the seaport of Jamnia to the mouth of the river Bezor. The extent of their *inland* territories cannot be satisfactorily ascertained, but they were upon the whole confined within narrow limits.

Gath, the birth-place of the gigantic warrior Goliath, was conquered by king David, fortified by Rehoboam, and retaken by Uzziah and Hezekiah. It was seated under the 35th degree of east longitude, and 31st degree, 56 min. of north latitude; six miles south of Jamnia, fourteen south of Joppa, and thirty-two west of Jerusalem. It recovered its liberty and pristine splendour in the days of Amos and Micah, but was afterwards demolished by Hazael, king of Syria. After that period it was a place of small consideration, till the holy war, when Fulk, king of Jerusalem, erected a castle on its ruins.

Ekron, situated about ten miles south of Gath, and thirty-four west of Jerusalem, appears to have been a place of considerable strength and importance. Upon the first division of "The promised Land," it fell to the lot of Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan.

Ashdod was a famous port on the Mediterranean, situated about fifteen miles south of Ekron, between that city and Ascalon. It was here the idol Dagon fell in pieces before the ark of God. The strength of the place was so considerable, that it is said to have sustained a siege of

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twenty-nine years under Psammetichus king of Egypt.

Ascalon, another maritime town, and satrapy, lying between Ashdod and Gaza, was reckoned the strongest of any on the Philistine coast; but was soon reduced, after the death of Joshua, by the tribe of Judah. This city was made an episcopal see from the earliest ages of christianity, and during the holy war it was adorned with several magnificent edifices; but these have been demolished by the Saracens and Turks, and Ascalon is now dwindled into an inconsiderable village.

Gaza, the last satrapy, stood on a fine eminence, about fifteen miles south of Ascalon, four north of the river Bezor, and at a small distance from the Mediterranean. It was surrounded by the most beautiful valleys, supplied with an abundance of water, and encompassed, at a further distance on the inland side, with cultivated hills. The city was remarkably strong, and surrounded with walls and towers after the Philistine manner. It was taken by Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, but soon after regained by the ancient inhabitants, who kept possession of it till the time of Samson. It passed from the Jews to the Chaldeans, Persians, and Egyptians, till it was pillaged by Alexander the Great. It was a second time destroyed by the Maccabees, and no further mention is made of it till St. Luke speaks of it as a ruined place.

It stands about three miles distant from the sea, and still exhibits some noble monuments of antiquity, such as stately marble colonnades, finely wrought sepulchres, &c. In the immediate vicinage of the city is a round castle, flanked with



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four square towers; and a little above it are the remains of an old Roman castle, the materials of which are so firm, that the hammer will make no impression on them. The Greeks have here a handsome church, with a fine roof, supported by marble pillars of the Corinthian order. The castle is the residence of the sangiac. The adjacent territory is pleasant and delightful; but beyond it the ground is rather barren, quite to the river of Egypt, and inhabited by wild Arabs.

Majuma, or New Gaza, was the ancient seaport to the former, and a place of considerable note in the time of Constantine the Great. It stood near the mouth of the river Bezor, in 31 deg. 41 min. north latitude, and 34 deg. 50 min. east longitude. It still possesses some curious antiquities, but it would be now difficult to determine whether they belonged originally to Majuma or Old Gaza.

To the south of Majuma stood the two maritime cities of Anthedon and Rhinocolura: the former was a port on the Mediterranean, destroyed by Alexander Junneus, one of the Maccabitish kings, and afterwards rebuilt by Herod, who called it Agrippius, in honour of Agrippa, the favourite of Augustus. The latter was seated on the northern side of the river of Egypt, which parted that kingdom from the tribe of Simeon. It very early became a bishopric under the metropolitan of Pelusiam; and in the time of the holy war it was converted into a strong fortress, under the name of Pharamica. It is at present an inconsiderable place, and the circumjacent territory a mere wilderness.

It now remains to conclude the present section with a concise account of the countries belonging

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to those nations that were seated round Palestine, and whose history has been given in the preceding chapters.

Idumea, or the Land of Edom, constituted a part of Arabia Petræa, having Judea on the north, Egypt, and a branch of the Red sea, on the west, the rest of Arabia Petræa on the south, and the desert of Arabia on the east. Its extent seems to have varied considerably at different periods, in consequence of which Josephus distinguishes it, when at the largest, by the epithet of Great, in opposition to its more narrow boundaries. The same author divides it into Upper and Lower Idumea; but the country, upon the whole, is represented as dry, mountainous, hot, and, in some parts, steril; the high lands exhibiting many dreadful caverns and recesses, which resemble those in the southern part of Judah. This country is at present under the dominion of the Turks, mostly waste and uncultivated; and inhabited by wild Arabs, with whom Europeans have little intercourse.

The nation of Amalek was seated in that part of Arabia Petræa which lay eastward of the Edomites, and extended almost as far north as the Asphaltite lake, and southward as the Red sea; but as the people were mostly of a wandering disposition, and lived in booths, tents, or caverns, like the Arabs, it is impossible to ascertain their limits with any degree of precision.

Midianitis, or the Land of Midian, was situated on the north of Amalek. It was hot, sandy, and in many parts desert; yet abounded with camels and other species of cattle. It appears to have contained many cities, castles, &c. as early as the time of the Exodus. The city of Midian was, in

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all probability, rebuilt subsequent to that period, as both Eusebius and St. Jerom assert there were some remains of it to be seen in their time.

The land of Moab was likewise in Arabia Petræa, on the north of Midian, having the river Arnon on the west, the land of Gilead on the north, and the Ishmaelites on the east. It contained several considerable cities, which the Moabites wrested from the gigantic Emins, but which were afterwards possessed by the Jews.

The Ammonites were seated to the north-east of their brethren the Moabites in Arabia Deserta, having the Arnon on the west, the Ishmaelites on the south, the deserts of Arabia on the east, and the hills of Bashan and Gilead on the north. Their territories, according to the sacred historians, seem to have been anciently confined by the rivers Jabbok and Arnon; but their frequent incursions into the neighbouring states occasioned their boundaries to be in constant fluctuation.

The descendants of Ishmael, the Son of Abraham and Hagar, occupied a part of Arabia Deserta, eastward of Moab and Midian, and bounded on the north by Ammon; but how far they extended southward and eastward it is impossible to determine. It may however be presumed, from an assertion of Moses, that their territory reached from Havilah, which was situated near the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, to Shur, on the Isthmus of Suez. Thence they are said to have spread themselves over the greatest part of Arabia; in consequence of which Josephus styles their progenitor the founder of the Arabian nation.

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## SECT. II.

*The Religion, Government, Customs, Learning, Arts, and Commerce, of the Jews.*

THE religion of the Jews, though formerly clouded with mysterious ceremonies, and now totally eclipsed by the radiance of the Gospel, must ever be considered as an object of veneration; since its institution, benefits, and great rewards, are wholly attributed to God. Their *laws** were admirably adapted to honour their Creator, and to render themselves completely happy; *sacrifices* were at once calculated to remind them of their failings, which required a diurnal atonement, and to shadow forth the vicarious sacrifice that should, "in the fulness of time," be offered for the sins of the world; and even their most trivial *ceremonies* were replete with instruction, or typical of the gracious designs of the Almighty.

Their government has been justly distinguished from that of all other nations by the name of Theocracy, as being under the immediate direction of God. It must indeed be acknowledged, that this theocracy varied, in some degree, under Moses, Joshua, the judges, kings, and high-priests; yet the Deity was considered as the sole dictator of every important transaction, the author of each beneficial institution, and the supreme monarch of the Israelites.

* As the *size* of "The new Universal History" precludes the *recital* of these laws, and the volume of *Holy Writ* contains a *full, clear,* and *satisfactory* account of them, the reader may satisfy his curiosity in every particular by referring to the Book of *Leviticus*.

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Their customs, both civil and religious, were chiefly founded upon their laws; and will consequently be found in the same illustrative narration. Some of the most particular however are selected for the gratification of the curious reader.

The rite of circumcision was always accompanied with great feasting, and other demonstrations of joy. At this time the child was named in the presence of the company; after which the master of the house took a cupful of wine, and blessing his Creator, sipped a little of it, and passed it round to his friends; this was called *the blessing of the wine.* He then commenced *the blessing of the bread*, and distributed it in a similar manner; and when the guests had done eating, he solemnly returned thanks to God, and concluded the feasts with another cup of wine, which was styled *the blessing of plenty.* Whether they sat or lay down at their repasts is a controversy of small importance: the *former* custom seems to have prevailed before the captivity; but the *latter* was certainly adopted at the time of our Saviour's institution of the holy sacrament.

Marriage does not appear to have been accompanied with any religious ceremony; such as going to the temple, offering sacrifices, or requiring the benediction of a priest. When a contract was formed by the parents and relations on both sides, the bridegroom was introduced to his bride, a solemn agreement was signed before witnesses, and the bride, after some time, was sent to her new habitation, with songs, dances, and the melody of various musical instruments.

Their diet, except on festivals, seems to have been extremely plain; for Boaz, a man of considerable property, complimented Ruth with eating

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of the same *bread*, drinking of the same *water*, and dipping her morsel in *vinegar* with him. The present of victuals brought to David, whilst he laboured under the persecution of Saul, consisted of bread, raisins, parched corn, a few sheep, and two bottles of wine. Honey was esteemed a peculiar delicacy; and the milk of the goats and the fleece of the flocks were pronounced, by the wise man, sufficient for food and raiment, both for the master and his family.

Their diversions seem to have consisted chiefly in social repasts, music, and dancing. Games were never introduced into their commonwealth; but the Scripture frequently expresses the simplicity of their happy lives by sitting, and eating, and drinking, every one under his vine and beneath his fig-tree. Music was evidently dear to them, as the high praises of their Creator were performed in concert with the sound of various instruments; and dancing was frequently mingled with their solemn acknowledgment of any signal blessing. Thus king David is said to have danced before the ark; and the tribes are exhorted, in the hundred and fiftieth psalm, to praise God with the timbrel and dance.

Their high places were of two sorts: those where they burned incense and offered sacrifices to the true God; and those where they committed various abominable idolatries. Both these became so common and universal, that few kings had the courage to destroy the latter, notwithstanding the repeated admonitions of the holy prophets.

The same spirit of dissipation, which induced the Israelites to direct their worship to dumb idols, led them gradually into the practice of divination

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and necromancy, though the law of Moses expressly enjoined, that such persons should be put to death.

High titles were unknown among them unless those which implied some office: as general, treasurer, or recorder. They value themselves greatly upon their genealogies; and some regard was likewise had to the distinction of tribes or families, as to that of Judah, to which the sceptre was promised; to that of Ephraim, out of respect to Joseph's memory; and to those of the priests and Levites, upon a religious account. The utmost respect was shown to the heads and fathers of every tribe, and ancient men of all descriptions were considered as objects of veneration.

Their houses were commonly plain, low, and flat, suitable to the climate. Chimneys, sashes, or casements, were needless, where they were obliged to study coolness; and for the same reason tapestry was of no use, but to sit, eat, or sleep upon.

Their industry and frugality, together with the wholesome temperature of their climate, were effectual preventives against many of those diseases, which, in later ages, have been ushered into the world by sloth and luxury. Hence we read of but few distempers that were prevalent among them, and still less physicians, except such as are now known by the name of surgeons.

Their mourning for the death of any near relation, or for any melancholy accident, was expressed by rending their garments, tearing their hair, heaping dirt or ashes upon their heads, wearing sackcloth next the skin, and lying upon the bare ground.

Their funeral ceremonies were equally mourn-

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ful. As soon as a person was dead, all the nearest relatives assembled at his house in their mourning habit, and sat down upon the ground in silence, whilst other apartments echoed with the lamentations of hired mourners, and the sound of such instruments as were deemed suitable to the occasion.

In the mean time proper persons were appointed to prepare the defunct for interment, either by embalming him, or washing his body and sprinkling it with odoriferous drugs, according to his quality.

They denied sepulture to none but such as were guilty of suicide, and not even to these but till after sunset. The provident care of the patriarchs, respecting a sepulchre for their descendants, is a convincing proof that they accounted it a heavy calamity to be deprived of burial, and a blessing to be interred among their ancestors. They held it as a matter of indifference *where* their tombs were erected, whether in a field, an orchard, a mountain, or a garden, provided they could but secure the possession of the purchase; they were however curious to have them, if possible, cut into a rock, which was no difficult matter in so mountainous a country. They had particular cemeteries for strangers, and for such persons as were put to death for capital crimes.

With respect to their learning, it is certain they were extremely careful to cultivate the knowledge of theology among themselves, and had places of public instruction called the schools of the prophets. Their changing the solar into the lunar year, and the complete month of thirty days into the irregular moons of twenty-nine and thirty; their division of the day into four parts, and the

night into four watches, are however strong presumptions of their ignorance in the science of astronomy, even at a time when it was well known to the neighbouring nations; nor do they appear to have had any instruments to reckon time, except the sun-dial, or as the original implies, *the flight of steps* of Ahaz.

Their language was the Hebrew; the genius of which is pure, primitive, natural, and strictly conformable to the simplicity of the Jewish patriarchs: and it is highly probable, that not only they, but all their trading neighbours, had the art of writing very early; though it is impossible to determine whether each nation had a peculiar character of their own, or the same in common to them all.

The materials upon which they wrote, and their instrument for writing, may, in some measure, be ascertained from certain passages of Scripture. It is plain that the Decalogue was written upon tables of stone; but Moses in all probability, made use of a less cumbersome material to write the rest of his laws upon. The custom of writing upon tables was continued till the time of our Saviour: but mention is also made of their writing upon rolls, which are reasonably supposed to have been made of skins, or some other pliable substance.

The arts in which the Israelites seem to have made the greatest proficiency were those of war, husbandry, poetry, and music. The first was in a manner natural to them, on account of the numerous enemies they had to vanquish prior to their possession of the Promised Land, and the various excursions which they were continually making under their kings or other leaders. It

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cannot now be determined, whether they acquired any military knowledge during their residence in Egypt; but whoever considers the excellent order of their encampments, combats, and occasional retreats, under the auspices of Moses, must allow them to have been as well trained as any of their neighbours.

The valiant deeds of their generals will appear in their proper place in the sequel of this history. It is therefore only requisite to say, that as soon as the rulers had resolved upon a war, a summons was sent to every tribe; upon which all persons capable of bearing arms assembled at the place of rendezvous, and were drawn out according to the exigence of the state. No mention is made of regular troops before the time of David.

Their arms, like those of other ancient nations, were either offensive or defensive. The former consisted of broad crooked swords, javelins, slings, bows and arrows, and two-edged swords: the latter were shields, helmets, coats of mail, breastplates, and targets. These arms were commonly made of brass, and sometimes of iron or steel.

The Israelitish army, in the day of battle, was drawn up in twelve separate bodies, according to the number of tribes: these were subdivided into legions, centuries, decuries, and single files, each under its respective leader; and they observed a regular system in all their military evolutions.

In the beginning of the Jewish monarchy their kings used to fight on foot; at least no mention is made of any chariots or cavalry among them, till a considerable time after their settlement. The officers of war under them consisted of the general of the army, the princes of each tribe, the

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commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens, and threes; the scribes or muster masters, and lastly, the soterim or inspectors.

Few trades or manufactures were carried on among the Jews before the reign of Solomon, except such as were absolutely necessary. They built their own houses, and their wives and servants attended to all domestic avocations. The dress of the men consisted of linen drawers and tunics, over which they threw a loose garment of woollen cloth when they went abroad. The fashion of their head dress is now unknown, neither is it easy to determine what sort of stockings they used; but instead of shoes they wore sandals fastened on the upper part of the foot. The beauty of their apparel consisted either in the fine texture of the cloth, or the richness of the dye, such as purple, scarlet, blue, and yellow.

The dress of the women, especially of the highest class, was more curious, as they bestowed more ornament upon it, chiefly of needle-work, which was within their own province. They also wore jewels of gold and silver, which were first brought from Egypt, and afterwards augmented by the spoil of their enemies, and their commerce with Tyre. After Solomon's time pride and luxury increased so rapidly, that the prophet Isaiah has spent almost a whole chapter in enumerating the costly ornaments, with which the female Israelites used to decorate their persons.

Before the time of David, a wonderful economy seems to have reigned in every family, under the men abroad, and the women at home. But that monarch having conceived a strong desire to build a sumptuous temple, introduced a number of artificers into his dominions, such as masons,

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carpenters, founders, goldsmiths, and all manner of workmen in metals, wood, and stone; and these brought in many others, without whom they could not subsist. His celebrated successor built some stately palaces as well as the temple; and these occasions gave the people such a relish for elegance, that the number of workmen multiplied more and more.

Poetry is said to be the only art in which the Israelites excelled. It had this peculiar advantage, that the authors consecrated it entirely to the honour of God, and adapted it to the service of his temple. The poetical performances of monarchs, prophets, priests, and judges, were all inspired by the most laudable emotions; written with energy, zeal, and accuracy; and rehearsed with unfeigned warmth in the great congregation. The varied feelings of the human heart, with all the passions of love, grief, joy, anger, and unbounded gratitude, were painted in the most lively colours in these productions; and whoever peruses the songs of Moses, the Psalms of David, the book of Job, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, with any degree of attention, must of necessity acknowledge them to abound with sublimity of sentiment, imagery, and expression.

There are, however, few points more warmly contested, or less possible to be satisfactorily decided, than the metre and cadence of the Hebrew poetry. To apologise for the uncertainty of the moderns, respecting these particulars, it is proper to remark, that the *true pronunciation* of the Hebrew language has been lost ever since the captivity; in consequence of which it is now impossible to ascertain either the proper length of syllables or the harmony of words and verses, in



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which a great part of poetic beauty consists. Some authors have attempted to give precise accounts of every poetical piece in the Old Testament, but they have only provoked more learned antagonists to expose their weakness. It has been asserted that the songs of Moses were written in heroic verse; and that the psalms were of a mixed sort, trimiters, pentameters, and sometimes hexameters; but the generality of moderns suppose that the greatest part of them were of the lyric kind, composed and set to music, and performed with dances and instrumental melody.

Of the music with which they enlivened their poetical recitations, little is known but from conjecture. Mention is made, in the sacred volume, of ten-stringed instruments, of the nebel and kinor, which, probably, resembled the lute and harp; and of several wind instruments, as the flute, trumpet, and what modern versions call the organ.

Should the reader judge of the excellence of the Hebrew music, from the surprising effects it had upon the distempered mind of Saul, and the souls of the prophets, he must naturally suppose it possessed a superior energy to any composition of the moderns. Similar effects have, indeed, been ascribed to the Grecian music; and the most barbarous nations are still transported by species of music equally harsh and defective. The style of several of the psalms, and the frequent transition from the first to the third person, afford a strong presumption, that the music was performed alternately, one part of the chorus answering to the others at proper stanzas, like the choirs in European cathedrals.

Such of their dances as appertained to religious

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services were more grave and solemn, than those which merely expressed the satisfaction of a happy people; but whether confined to rules, or directed only by custom and imitation, whether circular, or of any other particular form, can only be conjectured from the practices of other ancient nations.

With respect to commerce, it appears that they received rich stuffs, linen, gold, &c. from Tyre, in exchange for their corn, balm, and other excellent commodities: but they were totally ignorant of navigation; for the maritime tribes contented themselves with receiving merchants into their harbours, without attempting to extend their trade; and when Solomon resolved to send some ships into foreign countries, he was compelled to have them manned with foreign sailors.

## SECT. III.

*The Jewish History from Abraham to the Death of Joseph.*

ABRAHAM, the progenitor and founder of the Jewish nation, was about seventy-four years of age when he quitted the place of his nativity with his aged father, Terah, and removed into Haran, where he had not been long settled before Terah died. Immediately after the performance of his obsequies, Abraham was commanded, by God, to depart B. C. 1921.

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into another land where he should enjoy the protection of Heaven, and experience so felicitous an increase, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He readily obeyed the divine call, by migrating with his wife, his nephew, and his servants, into the Land of Promise, where he pitched his tents in the vicinage of Sichem, and built an altar unto the Lord.

B. C. 1920. Here God vouchsafed to appear to him again, confirming the former promise, and assuring him, that his posterity should, at a future day, possess the country in which he was now a stranger. In a short time, however, Abraham was obliged to remove from Egypt, to elude the dreadful effects of a great famine, which occurred in Canaan. The fear he was in upon account of Sarah his wife, whose beauty was sufficiently striking to endanger the man's life who should pass for her husband, made him resolve that she should style herself his sister in every place where they might sojourn. From this descent into Egypt, the generality of chronologers compute the space of four hundred and thirty years mentioned by St. Paul, agreeably to the assertion of Moses in another place, that Israel dwelt in Egypt four hundred and thirty years.

B. C. 1919. The patriarch had not long resided in Egypt before Pharaoh became enamoured of Sarah's charms, and took her to his court, showing extraordinary favours, for her sake, to her pretended brother. The Almighty was, however, pleased to interpose on behalf of his servants, and Pharaoh was made so sensible of the anger of Heaven, that he voluntarily restored Abraham's wife free from violation, and issued

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out orders for their safe departure from his dominions.

Abraham immediately quitted Egypt, and, directing his steps to Bethel, where the famine had now ceased, offered a sacrifice of thanks for his safe return. In the mean time, the herds of Lot, his nephew, increased so considerably, that sharp contentions arose between the herdsmen, and Abraham resolved to separate in a friendly manner, as is already related in the history of Moab. Upon Lot's departure to the fertile plains of Sodom, Abraham removed to the land of Moreh in Hebron, where he contracted a friendship with three of the greatest men of the place; viz. Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol, who, in process of time rendered him some important services, and assisted him in rescuing Lot from Chedorlaomer.

He afterward removed to Hebron, where God appeared to him the fifth time in a vision, and encouraged him with fresh assurances of especial favour, adding, that he would be his exceeding great reward. Abraham now ventured to expostulate, for the first time, with his Creator, observing, that he could not comprehend how those reiterated promises could be fulfilled, while he continued childless, and, to all appearance, should leave his substance to his steward, one Eliezer, of Damascus. God vouchsafed to answer, that not Eliezer, but a son of his own should inherit his property, and promised to make his posterity like the stars of Heaven for multitude. Abraham was, at this time eighty-five years old, and Sarah, turned of seventy-four, was deemed barren. Circumstances which might have staggered an ordinary faith, but the volume of Holy

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Writ informs us, "he believed in God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." He, however, presumed to demand a sign, and God granted his request. Abraham having killed a young heifer, a goat, and a ram, with a pigeon and turtle dove, in obedience to the Divine injunction, divided the beasts in the middle, and then joining the pieces, laid the birds upon them, whilst he himself stayed to drive away the fowls from the sacrifice. As soon as the sun began to set, a deep sleep fell upon him, succeeded by a horror of great darkness; during which, it was revealed to him, that his descendants should sojourn, and be afflicted in a strange land for the term of four hundred years; but that God would afterward punish their oppressors, and bring them safely into the promised land. After this revelation, Abraham beheld a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass between the victims as a token of the ratification of God's covenant.

B. C. 1911. Sarah, not suspecting that *she* was to bear the promised child at an age which seemed to preclude the possibility of gestation, resolved to become a mother by proxy, according to the custom of that age and country. She accordingly persuaded her husband, to take her hand-maid Hagar to him: but finding herself insulted by the slave whom her kindness had raised, she could not refrain from uttering some bitter complaints. Abraham, being anxious to convince his wife, that he still loved her with unabated tenderness, gave her free permission to act in what manner she thought proper. She immediately adopted so harsh a mode of behaviour, that Hagar fled from her presence, and wandered to a fountain on the road to Sur, leading

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to Egypt. Here she was accosted by an angel of God, who persuaded her to return to her mistress and assured her that she should soon be delivered of a son, whom she should call Ishmael; that his posterity would be extremely numerous; that their hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against them; and that they should dwell in the face of all their brethren.

Hagar obeyed the angel's command, and brought forth Ishmael in the eighty-sixth year of Abraham's age. The patriarch brought up this child as the promised heir of all his substance, and Hagar prudently concealed what she had learnt from the angel, so that near thirteen years elapsed after this event, before he received an explicit promise that he should have a son by Sarah his wife.

By this time Abraham had attained to the ninety-ninth year of his age, when God was pleased to ratify his former covenant with him, by changing his name from Abram to Abraham, assuring him that he should be the father of many nations; commanding him to circumcise all the males in his family on the eighth day after their birth; and informing him that Sarah his wife should bear a son, who should inherit all the promised blessings, and therefore, her name should be no longer Sarai, but Sarah. The patriarch, falling on his face, began to intercede for the preservation of Ishmael, beyond which he deemed it unreasonable to ask any thing. But God assured him, that these blessings were not designed for Ishmael, but for a son, to be born of the hitherto barren Sarah, whom he should name Isaac; that the son of Hagar should indeed, be

B. C. 1898.

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blessed with a numerous posterity, but that Isaac alone should be entitled to the covenant of promise, and that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed.

B. C. 1897. Abraham, having cheerfully obeyed the command of his Maker with respect to the males of his family, was soon honoured with another visit more remarkable than the former. Sitting one day before the door of his tent, he saw three persons at a distance, whom he supposed to be strangers; and going forth to meet them, invited them, respectfully, to partake of a refreshment with him. In this interview, his divine guest confirmed his promise of Sarah's bearing a son within the year. Sarah, who was listening at the tent door, betrayed her incredulity by an involuntary burst of laughter; and the stranger asked the cause of her irreverent mirth, in so serious a tone, that she would fain have denied it; but it was to no purpose that she endeavoured to hide any thing from the heavenly visitor, who dismissed her with this gentle reproof, that she was highly culpable in mistrusting his assertions, since nothing was impossible with God.

The celestial guests now rose up in order to pursue their journey; and Abraham accompanied them some part of the way, till one of them, whom the original calls "the Lord*," informed him that the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah had ascended to

* The name of Jehovah, by which Moses calls the stranger who conversed with Abraham, being regarded by the generality of Jews and Christians as the incommunicable name of God, it is rationally supposed this was the second person of the blessed Trinity who appeared in that form.

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Heaven; and that he was going down to destroy those places, if he found their crimes equal to the report.

The patriarch, remembering his nephew, Lot, and stimulated by compassion for his fellow-creatures, earnestly interceded for such righteous men as might be found among the sinners; and continued his solicitations till he obtained an assurance, that if *ten* just persons were found in the place, God would lay aside his purposed judgment for their sake. The fate of those cities and the deliverance of Lot, having appeared in the preceding volume, it is only requisite to observe, that Abraham, on the ensuing morning, beheld the smoke of the polluted country ascending like the smoke of a furnace.

Soon after this period, Abraham removed from the plains of Mamre into the country of the Philistines, where king Abimelech secured Sarah for his bed, supposing her to have been the patriarch's sister; but God appeared to the Philistine in a dream, and threatened him with instant death, if he did not immediately restore the woman to her husband; in consequence of which, Sarah was sent back with many valuable presents.

At the appointed time, Sarah was delivered of the child of promise, who was circumcised on the eighth day, and named Isaac, agreeably to the command of the Almighty. The venerable couple were now in the zenith of their happiness: Sarah having suckled the infant at her own breast, weaned him at the customary time; and her pious husband made a feast to all his household on the joyful occasion. But this felicity suffered some alloy from the jealousy, B. C. 1896.



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which Isaac occasioned to Hagar and her son; for Isaac had scarcely attained his seventh year, when his mother, perceiving that Ishmael treated him with disrespect, resolved to part them for ever, that the son of the bond-woman might have no share in the inheritance. Though Abraham loved his wife so tenderly, that he could deny her nothing, yet he considered her intention as cruel and unreasonable; but God confirming Sarah's request, and promising to make Ishmael the father of a great nation, he was at length prevailed on to send Hagar and her son away.

About twenty-five years after this event, Abraham's faith and obedience were put to the most severe test, he being commanded by the Almighty to take Isaac, his only and dearly beloved son, to a certain mountain, and there to offer him up as a burnt-sacrifice. The justly-celebrated patriarch, without presuming to expostulate upon the severity of these orders, resolved to obey; leaving to God the performance of his own promises. He accordingly set out, the very next morning, and, on the third day, came within sight of Mount Moriah, the place appointed for the dreadful sacrifice. Leaving his servants behind, he ascended the mountain with the darling of his old age, laden with the wood and other materials for a burnt-offering. Isaac, seeing nothing of a victim, could not forbear questioning his father, who replied, calmly, that God would provide a lamb for the occasion. Having built an altar, and laid the wood in order, Abraham bound his son, and stretched out his hand to give the fatal blow: but God was pleased to countermand his injunction, and to renew all his promises to his well-tried servant, who had not attempted to with-

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hold his *only son* from him. Abraham then discovered a ram, caught by the horns in a bush, which he immediately sacrificed instead of his son, and, in memory of the transaction, called the place Jehovah-jire, *the Lord will provide*, alluding to the answer he had given Isaac on ascending the mountain. He soon after heard the welcome news, that his sister-in-law, Milcah, had borne a numerous issue, a circumstance which induced him to send to that family for a wife for Isaac.

Abraham appears to have lived in the utmost tranquillity with Isaac and Sarah, till his happiness was disturbed by the death of the latter, which happened in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age, in the city of Hebron. Her husband went thither to mourn for her, and to procure her an honourable sepulture. He accordingly purchased the cave of Machpelah, with the field belonging to it, from Ephron the Hittite, for four hundred pieces of silver, and deposited in that place the remains of his beloved wife. B. C. 1860.

The patriarch, being anxious to see Isaac married to some branch of his own family, called one of his most faithful servants to him, and having compelled him to take an oath that he would execute his commission with fidelity, gave him suitable instructions to conclude the marriage. The servant proceeded with all possible speed to Haran, where Abraham's brother resided, and partly by rich presents, and partly by the favourable account he gave of Abraham's wealth and grandeur, easily obtained the beautiful Rebecca for his young master. Having thus acquitted himself of his commission, B. C. 1857.

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he hastened back to Abraham; and Rebecca was received by Isaac with every mark of affectionate respect.

B. C. 1853. Abraham, though greatly delighted with the marriage of his son, deemed it advisable to console himself for the loss of his beloved Sarah, by espousing Keturah, after he had continued a widower for several years. By this union he had six sons, whom he afterward portioned, that they might not interfere with Isaac's inheritance. They accordingly went to the eastward of Beersheba and the land of Canaan, and settled in both Arabias, where some traces of their name may still be found.

Nothing more is recorded of this famous patriarch, but, that he died in the hundred and seventy-fifth year of his age, and was buried by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, in the sepulchral cave of Machpelah.

B. C. 1838. Rebecca, who had continued barren for upwards of nineteen years, was at length delivered of two sons, whom she called Esau and Jacob. Esau became a great hunter, and, consequently, the darling of his father, who was very fond of venison; but Jacob was the especial favourite of his mother, who knew, by revelation, that he should inherit the blessing. This knowledge she probably communicated to the object of her maternal love, as he was not above twenty years old when he contrived to make his brother swear away his birthright.

Isaac, having removed to Gerar, in consequence of a famine, and formed an amicable treaty with king Abimelech, resolved to confer a solemn benediction on his first-born Esau, before he died. He therefore commanded

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him to go in quest of some venison, and dress it to his palate; expressing a wish to put his design in execution immediately. Esau cheerfully obeyed these injunctions; but Rebecca, having overheard the discourse, caused Jacob to personate his brother, and executed her plan with such admirable prudence, that Isaac had pronounced the irrevocable blessing, before his eldest son returned from the chase. Jacob hastened to acquaint his mother with their brilliant success, and Esau was soon convinced that he had been circumvented in his absence. A pathetic scene ensued between the venerable patriarch and his afflicted son; but the former strenuously insisted that his blessing should remain with Jacob. However, to assuage Esau's excessive grief, he blessed him also in these words, "Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of Heaven from above: by thy sword and thy bow shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, that when thou shalt have the dominion, thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." This benediction was, however, so far from composing the mind of Esau, that he is said to have resolved on Jacob's assassination, and dropped such hints of his dark design, that Rebecca found a pretence for sending the object of his resentment beyond his reach, to Padan Aram.

Jacob being greatly encouraged by a singular dream, in the vicinage of Luz, proceeded cheerfully on his journey, till he arrived at the house of his uncle Laban. Here he was received with every demonstration of joy; and an agreement was soon made, by virtue of which, he was to serve his relative seven years, on condition of



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being rewarded with the hand of the beauteous Rachel. At the expiration of the stated time, Jacob demanded the dear remuneration of his labour, but Laban contrived to deceive him, by introducing him to the apartment of Leah. The bridegroom, finding, at the return of day, that instead of his beloved Rachel, he was united to her homely sister, expressed his resentment of his uncle's duplicity in the strongest terms. Laban apologised for his behaviour by observing, that it was an unprecedented thing in that country, to marry the youngest sister before the eldest; and pacified his nephew, by offering to give him Rachel also at the expiration of the nuptial week, for the benefit of seven other years of faithful service.

B. C. 1757. Jacob's behaviour was extremely different toward his two wives. Rachel having the entire possession of his heart, whilst Leah was obliged to content herself with mere civility. Yet the latter was made the happy mother of many children, whilst her sister was, for a considerable length of time, supposed to be barren. Leah was soon delivered of a son, whom she named Reuben, intimating that God had seen her affliction, and given her a child, which might, probably, endear her to her husband. She afterward bore another whom she called Simeon, because she said the Almighty had listened to her complaint; her third she distinguished by the name of Levi, hoping her husband would be now cordially joined to her; and the fourth she called Judah, thinking herself bound to praise God for his repeated mercies.

Rachel was by this time so extremely mortified at her sister's fruitfulness, that she began to mur-

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murr against the dispensations of Providence, and peevishly told her husband, that unless he gave her children also, she should assuredly die with grief. Jacob replied that he was not possessed of the power of working miracles; and exhorted her to look up to God for the fulfilment of her desire, instead of provoking the divine anger by her unavailing discontent. This answer silenced her upbraidings, and she gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob, by whom he had two sons; the first of which Rachel called Dan, to imply that *God had judged in her favour;* and the other she called Naphtali, to express the struggles she had with her sister.

Leah, supposing that she had left off bearing, gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob, whose first son she named Gad *(a troop)* expecting more to follow; and the next she called Asher, on account of the felicity which she now enjoyed. She was, herself, delivered of two more sons, whom she called Issachar and Zebulun; and had likewise a daughter, whom she named Dinah. Rachel's inquietude was also at length, appeased, as God vouchsafed to grant her a son, whom she called Joseph.

Jacob having now completed his fourteen years of servitude, requested Laban's permission to remove, with his family, to the residence of his venerable parents. But the great advantages, which had already resulted from his fidelity and attention, rendered his uncle extremely averse to his proposal, and induced him to offer fresh wages, upon condition, that he should relinquish his design. An agreement was soon executed; but Laban's avarice invented so many stratagems to defraud his son-in-law, that the latter was compelled to

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use others in his own defence, which were attended with such signal success, that he became exceedingly rich, while Laban's property gradually diminished.

B. C. 1739. That peculiar blessing, which was evidently stamped by Heaven itself on all the concerns of Jacob, gave such umbrage to Laban and his sons, that they began to abate of their former respectful behaviour, and to regard him with the jaundiced eye of jealousy. Jacob, accordingly, resolved to quit a place which no longer afforded him the blessings of content; and having imparted his design to his wives, commenced his journey, with all his household, to the Land of Canaan, while his uncle was engaged, at some distance, in sheep-shearing. Laban received intelligence of this transaction on the third day, and went immediately in pursuit of the fugitives; but seven days elapsed before he overtook them, by which time they had crossed the Euphrates, and formed a temporary encampment on the mountains of Gilead.

Laban had, in all probability, formed some evil design against Jacob, but, being intimidated by a vision from God in his sleep, he contented himself with upbraiding his relative with a precipitate flight, which deprived him of the satisfaction of caressing his daughters and children, and of dismissing them with the customary ceremonies of music and dancing. He also accused him of stealing his gods, which Rachel had, in fact, taken and concealed among the camel's furniture. To the first part of this complaint, Jacob readily answered, by adverting to the various frauds which had been practised by his covetous uncle; and by expatiating on the ungrateful returns that

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had been made to his long and well tried services. But with respect to the theft he avowed his ignorance of the whole concern, and commanded that the most diligent search should be instantly made for the idols, in order that the culprit, if discovered, should be put to death. Laban lost no time, but searched every tent with the utmost care: his labour however was rendered fruitless by Rachel's presence of mind; and he was at last obliged to submit to the loss of his precious goods. Some fresh expostulations now ensued between Laban and Jacob, who mutually agreed to rear a pile of stones, as a standing monument of their friendship and pacific intentions. This disign was immediately executed; a sacrifice was offered to God upon the occasion; the residue of the day was devoted to festivity; and next morning Laban, having bestowed his benedictions on the whole family, returned to Padan-Aram.

Jacob had no sooner obtained a complete deliverance from Laban's tyranny, than he began to dread the effects of his elder brother's resentment, though his anxiety was, in some measure, allayed by a vision of a host of angels, who appeared to him on the road. He dispatched messengers to acquaint Esau with the prosperous state of his affairs, and to announce his return from Mesopotamia. Esau immediately went forth to meet him with so numerous a train of followers, that Jacob concluded he came for his destruction. With this idea, he divided his family into two bands, that if one perished, the other might escape; addressed himself to God, in the language of true humility, for needful succour; and commanded his servants to advance, with some valuable presents of cattle, towards his bro-

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ther, whose esteem might possibly be conciliated by so respectful a mode of conduct.

Having made these arrangements in the best manner his time and exigence would permit, he caused his family and flocks to pass the brook Jabbok very early in the morning, whilst he himself tarried at Mahanaim, and obtained a blessing from a divine apparition in the form of a man, with which he wrestled till break of day. His name was now changed from Jacob to Israel, which signifies a man that has *prevailed with God*; and the new assurances which he received of the heavenly protection encouraged him to proceed cheerfully, till he had overtaken his family. His interview with Esau was pleasingly affecting, and he received a pressing invitation to Mount Seir; but thought proper to turn towards Succoth, whence he afterward removed to Salem, a city belonging to the Sechemites, where he settled, and erected an altar, which he consecrated to the "mighty God of Israel."

B. C. 1732. In this situation Jacob might, in all probability, have long enjoyed the blessings of domestic felicity, and the unfeigned respect of his neighbours, had not his two sons Simeon and Levi compelled him, by their treacherous massacre of the Sechemites, to remove nearer Mamre, where his father still resided.

Shortly after this event, Jacob, in obedience to the command of his Maker, conducted his family to Luz, afterward called Beth-el, where he built an altar, and called it El-Beth-el, or the *God of Beth-el*. His continuance at this place was however of short duration, as he was extremely anxious to visit his beloved father. In his journey towards Ephrath, Rachel fell in labour, and per-

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ceiving her approaching dissolution, called the child Benoni, or *the son of my affliction;* but after her decease, Jacob changed that melancholy name into Benjamin, or *the son of my right hand.* Rachel was interred in the way to Ephrath, and a stone monument was raised upon her grave. About the same time Reuben, having fallen in love with Bilhah, his father's concubine, committed an outrage, which made so deep an impression on Jacob's heart, that he grieved for it to the day of his death.

Jacob at length arrived at the dwelling of his old father, with whom he continued till the good patriarch yielded his spirit into the hand of his Maker, in the hundred and eightieth year of his age. He was buried by his two sons in the cave of Machpelah, with Abraham and Sarah.

The felicity, which Jacob had experienced during his last residence with his beloved parent, had suffered a sensible diminution by the illiberal disposition and cruel conduct of some part of his family. Joseph, who was then about seventeen years of age, and the peculiar darling of his father, became the object of his brethren's envy on account of his superior accomplishments, and the austerity of his virtue, which prompted him to make Jacob acquainted with the reprehensible conduct of the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. But envy was suddenly converted into the most irreconcilable hatred by his telling them some remarkable dreams, which clearly prefigured his future exaltation, and the humiliation of his brethren. From this time they resolved on his destruction, and embraced the first opportunity of delivering themselves from the restraint, which his presence usually imposed

B. C. 1729.

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on their actions. They agreed to kill him, and persuade their father that he was devoured by some wild beast; but Reuben having prevailed on them to cast him into a pit where he might die with hunger, they changed their design, and sold him to a troop of Ishmaelites, who happened to pass with balm and spices, on their way to Egypt. Reuben, who was absent during this transaction, expresses the utmost astonishment when he perceived Joseph was gone, and uttered such lamentable complaints, as rendered the inhuman brothers still more solicitous to conceal the steps they had taken. It was, however, universally agreed, that Jacob should be deceived respecting the fate of his beloved child; in consequence of which Joseph's party-coloured coat was dipped in the blood of a kid and sent to the good patriarch, who, recognising the garment, exclaimed in an agony of despair, "Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces;" and took his imaginary loss so much to heart, that he did not cease mourning on account of it, till he heard the surprising news of his son's advancement in Egypt.

Joseph happened to be sold to an officer of the king's guard, named Potiphar, whom he served with such diligence, zeal, and fidelity, that he was soon entrusted with the entire management of his master's affairs. In this situation he captivated the affections of Potiphar's wife, who made several attempts to seduce him into a compliance with her unlawful desires; and one day, in particular, accosted him in so passionate a manner, that Joseph fled abruptly from the house, leaving his upper garment, which she had laid hold of, in her hands. This repulse transported her instantaneously from the extreme of wanton love

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to that of revenge: she accordingly brought together all her domestics who were within hearing, and charged the innocent Hebrew with her own crime, producing the garment as a confirmation of her tale. Potiphar, being deceived by his perfidious wife, was violently incensed against his servant, and caused him to be immediately thrown into prison.

Joseph had not been long in this melancholy situation, before he ingratiated himself so effectually with the Egyptian gaoler, that he intrusted him with the care of all the prisoners. Two of these persons, viz. Pharaoh's chief butler and baker, acquainted Joseph with some remarkable dreams; which he readily interpreted, and also predicted the precise time of their accomplishment; observing, that within three days the butler should be restored to his employment, and the baker put to death. He then implored the assistance and interest of the former, relating the sad story of his early captivity, the injustice of his late mistress, and what else might be deemed suitable for the accomplishment of his design in appealing to the humanity of his fellow prisoner.

On the predicted day Pharaoh's prisoners were taken from confinement; when the chief baker was suspended from a tree, and the chief butler reinstated in the full possession of his place and privileges. But the promise which he had given to Joseph was now forgotten, amidst the splendour of the palace, and two years elapsed before the unfortunate son of Jacob obtained the expected deliverance.



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B. C. 1715. About this time the Egyptian monarch was greatly disturbed by two remarkable dreams*, which were justly considered as portentous of some great event or accident, though the magicians were unable to explain them. Joseph was then, upon the butler's recommendation, sent for out of prison; and the interpretation which he gave, together with the excellent advice he offered upon the important occasion, conciliated the king's esteem, and elevated him to the second station in the land.

Joseph, being now arrayed in the most costly robes, honoured with Pharaoh's warmest esteem, and seated in the second chariot of state, whilst the men who ran before it cried, "Bow the knee," made a progress through the whole kingdom; erected granaries, appointed proper officers in every place, and arranged all things with such exquisite foresight and application, that before the expiration of the plentiful years, he found his stores filled above numbering. During this time the king had given him the name of Zaphnah-Paaneah, or a revealer of secrets; and bestowed on him in marriage the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, by whom he had two sons; the first of whom he called Manasseh, to express that "God had made him forget all his toil;" and the second he named Ephraim, because his Maker had rendered him fruitful in the land of his affliction.

The seven plentiful years, implied by the first part of Pharaoh's dream were immediately succeeded by those of famine; nor was the scarcity confined to Egypt, but severely felt in the

* Vide Genesis xli.

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land of Canaan, and the adjoining nations. As soon therefore as the Egyptians began to be in want of bread, Joseph commanded his stores to be opened, and corn to be sold to the people, who flocked thither from all parts.

Jacob hearing of the political measures which had been taken in Egypt, sent ten of his sons thither to purchase grain, and kept only Benjamin at home. Upon their arrival they were directed to the governor, who instantly recognised their features, and beheld the accomplishment of his dream in their humble prostrations. He therefore demanded, in an angry tone of voice, whence they came; and upon their answering from Canaan, accused them of being spies; who, under the pretence of buying corn, designed to examine the weakness of the land. To this charge they replied, in the most submissive manner, by asserting that they were all one man's sons; and had left a younger brother with their father, who had been blessed with another besides, but he was now no more. Joseph, taking advantage of this declaration, told them, with an imperious air, that unless one of them would consent to fetch this youngest son, whilst the rest were detained in custody, he should be fully persuaded of their treacherous intentions, and should punish them accordingly.

At the expiration of three days, during which they had all been in confinement, he sent for them, and in a milder tone proposed that *nine* of them should depart with provision for their family, while *one* might remain in prison, till the arrival of the youngest brother should prove their sincerity. He then caused Simeon to be bound before their eyes, whilst he had the pleasure to

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hear them express their contrition for their inhuman conduct towards their brother Joseph, on whose account, they unanimously agreed, they were now chastised by the righteous providence of God.

The disconsolate brethren were now suffered to set out on their return, but had not travelled far, when they were equally dismayed and astonished by finding their money in their sacks. They immediately supposed that the haughty Egyptian lord had devised this expedient for their ruin, and doubted not but their next visit would be productive of the most direful misfortunes. With these ideas they returned to their father, and acquainted him with their mortifying adventures. The patriarch was much grieved at the detention of Simeon, and the harsh behaviour of the governor: but when he understood that Benjamin the darling of his soul, and the offspring of his beloved Rachel, must of necessity be carried to Egypt, his aged heart was overwhelmed with sorrow, the recollection of past afflictions rushed into his mind, and he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his soul, "My son shall not go down: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If mischief befal him by the way, then will my grey hairs be brought down with sorrow to the grave."

At length, however, the famine increasing, and the provision being nearly exhausted, Jacob was prevailed on to part with his favourite son for a time, in order that Simeon might be set at liberty, and his household preserved from destruction. He accordingly prepared such presents as he thought would be most acceptable to the Egyptian, and having given the strictest charge

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respecting Benjamin, furnished his sons with a supply of money, and earnestly entreated the Almighty to crown their journey with success.

When they presented themselves before Joseph, he commanded his steward to conduct them to his house, where he intended they should dine with him. But they, suspecting a design was forming against their liberty on account of the money they had recently found in their sacks, addressed themselves to the steward, and assured him they had brought it back, with a fresh supply for other provision. The man desired them to lay aside their ill-grounded apprehensions; and after introducing them to their brother Simeon, informed them they were to dine with the governor, who would return by noon.

Joseph made his appearance at the appointed hour, and honoured them with a friendly salutation, inquiring after their father's health, and demanding whether that was their youngest brother who stood before him. Benjamin bowed his head in token of reply, and Joseph having blessed him, commanded the dinner to be served. They were placed according to their seniority, whilst he sat at one table by himself, and his Egyptian friends at another; for it was an abomination to the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews. Joseph, according to the custom of the country, sent dishes from his own table to all his brethren; but Benjamin's portion was five times * larger than any of the rest.

After they had partaken of this repast, the sons of Jacob began to think of taking their leave;

* This was a particular mark of respect or affection towards the person to whom it was sent.



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and next morning set out on their return to their father: but Joseph's steward, overtaking them at some distance from the city, accused them of purloining his lord's drinking cup; and to their inexpressible amazement found the property in Benjamin's sack. Confounded at this terrible accident, and distracted for the safety of the supposed thief, they returned with all possible haste to Joseph who reprimanded them warmly for their ingratitude; but consented to pardon them all, except the person on whom the cup was found. He therefore told them, that he should retain Benjamin in slavery, and desired the rest to go home in peace.

Upon this declaration, Judah stepped forward to plead the cause of the imaginary culprit. He addressed himself to Joseph in the most pathetic language, expatiating on Israel's extreme fondness; adverting to his own solemn engagement for the safety of the youth; offering himself with unfeigned zeal as an equivalent for his brother; and drawing a lively picture of those incomparable agonies which must inevitably rend the heart of a venerable parent, in case his present petition was disregarded. Joseph listened for some time in silence to this affecting language, but at length his emotion became so visible, that he was forced to send all the by-standers away, while he made himself known to his brethren. Then giving free vent to his tears, he embraced them with inexpressible tenderness, assured them of his forgiveness for their intentional cruelty, and reminded them that his early captivity had, under the direction of Providence, been productive of the greatest blessings to himself, to them, and to all Egypt. Pharaoh, being informed in the mean

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time that Joseph's brethren were come to buy corn, was pleased to issue out orders for their removal into his dominions, promising they should never want sustenance or protection; and Joseph, in compliance with the orders of his royal patron, sent immediately for his father.

Jacob, on the return of his sons, inquired eagerly for his beloved Benjamin, and thought himself sufficiently happy in clasping that object of paternal affection once more to his generous bosom. But when he heard the astonishing news of Joseph's safety and exalted situation, the venerable Hebrew fainted beneath the oppressive emotions of his soul, and on reviving seemed to doubt whether it was not an illusion. At length, however, he regained sufficient strength to look on the rich presents, and the carriages, which were sent by Pharaoh's command; when raising his eyes to Heaven, he exclaimed with all the enthusiasm of mingled love and gratitude, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

Joseph was no sooner informed of his father's approach, than he went to meet him, and their mutual emotions upon this occasion were such as may be better imagined than expressed. The patriarch and his sons were then presented to Pharaoh, and received the royal permission to settle in the land of Goshen, where they received a constant supply from the granaries during the famine, and were intrusted with the care of the flocks and herds belonging to the king.

In this situation the family of Israel increased rapidly in wealth and numbers, under the blessing of God and the provident care of Joseph. At length Jacob finding by the visible decay of his

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bodily strength, that his dissolution was at hand, sent for his beloved son, and entreated that his body might be carried, after his decease, to Machpelah, and there deposited with his ancestors. Joseph cheerfully took an oath to fulfil this desire, and Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head, in token of gratitude to his creator.

B. C. 1689. Shortly after this transaction, Joseph presented his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to his father, requesting him to bless them before he died. Jacob, at the sight of his grand-children, sat up in his bed, though now in his last illness, and after recapitulating the glorious promises he had received from the Almighty concerning the future acquisitions of his numerous posterity, he observed, that for the sake of his beloved Rachel the sons of Joseph should be called the two tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, and as such should receive a double lot in the division of the Promised Land. The children were then brought to the bedside, and placed, by Joseph, in such a manner that the patriarch might lay his right hand upon the head of the eldest, and his left upon that of the youngest; but Jacob, by crossing his arms, reversed the intended position. This being attributed to a mistake, Joseph attempted to rectify it; but his father told him he acted by a divine impulse, and in blessing the youths he not only preferred Ephraim to Manasseh, but gave him much the nobler benediction.

Israel now caused his other sons to be assembled, and having pronounced a prophetical blessing to every tribe, reminded them of his earnest desire to be buried in the cave of Machpelah; after which he composed himself in his bed, and

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expired, in the hundred and forty-seventh year of his age, having resided seventeen years in the land of Goshen.

Joseph, after bedewing the corpse with a profusion of tears, and expressing all the filial sorrow which the loss of so dear a relative could inspire, acquainted his sovereign with the mournful event, and began to make suitable preparations for the funeral. The body was accordingly embalmed with the customary ceremonies; the Egyptians devoted seventy days to respectful lamentation; and the mournful procession was attended by all the males of Jacob's family, the chief officers of the king's household, and the grandees of the kingdom. As soon as the cavalcade, consisting of a vast multitude of chariots and horsemen, had crossed the river Jordan, they made a halt of seven days at the threshing floor of Atad, and there performed a funeral ceremony, which induced the Canaanites to call the place Abel-Mizraim, or *the mourning of the Egyptians.* Then resuming their march, they proceeded to Machpelah, where the sons of Israel performed his obsequies, and then returned to Egypt with the rest of the company.

Joseph's brethren, being now deprived of their parent's protection, and dreading the resentment of the governor, whom they had once treated with the most unpardonable cruelty, sent an humble message to inform him that it was their father's earnest wish he should forget all past injuries, and still indulge them with his protection. Joseph immediately sent for his petitioners, received them with all the warmth of fraternal tenderness, and gave them such unequivocal assurances of affection and support, that they departed to their

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respective families with joyful hearts, though probably astonished at that magnanimous disposition, to which they themselves appear to have been utter strangers.

B. C. 1639. Nothing more is recorded of this family till the period of Joseph's death; when he sent for his brethren, and assured them that God would certainly fulfil his immutable promise, and establish their posterity in the land of Canaan. He therefore requested, that they would not inter his remains in Goshen, but deposit them in some secure place, and, on the accomplishment of his prediction, carry them to the spot of ground which his beloved father had given him by his last will. Having expressed this wish to his brethren, and taken an oath of them for its due fulfilment, Joseph breathed out his soul in the hundred and tenth year of his age, having continued eighty years in possession of those honours, which Pharaoh conferred upon his extraordinary merit.

## SECT. IV.

*The History of the Jews, from the Commencement of their Egyptian Bondage to their Entrance into the Land of Promise.*

THE time when the Israelites were first oppressed in the land of Egypt cannot now be accurately determined, neither would it be

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easy to ascertain how long they had groaned beneath their bondage when Moses was born. If, however, the *time* be uncertain, the *cause* is sufficiently obvious, viz. the prodigious increase of their population, which excited the jealousy of the Egyptians, and induced them to weaken so formidable a multitude by taxes, labours, and every species of oppression.

This persecution began under the reign of a new monarch, who was either unacquainted with Joseph, or had forgotten the important services which that prudent minister had rendered both to the crown and nation of Egypt. Finding, at the expiration of several years, that neither the hardships he laid upon the Israelites nor the cruelties his officers used toward them, could prevent their increasing as fast as ever, he sent for the two chief Hebrew midwives, and strictly commanded them to destroy every new-born male, letting the females take their chance. But these women, who feared God and abhorred the idea of so barbarous an office, neglected the royal command, and saved all the children without discrimination. Pharaoh, incensed at the frustration of his design, issued out an edict under the severest penalties, that every male child of the Hebrews should be thrown into the Nile as soon as it was born, and that none but the females should be suffered to live; by which inhuman decree the Israelites were reduced to the melancholy necessity of drowning their own children, or of seeing them drowned by the Egyptians. They were accordingly thrown into the utmost consternation, and doubtless began to imagine, that God had either forgotten or revoked his gracious promises. But the great

B. C. 1573.

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Object of their adoration, whose designs could not be frustrated by private artifice or open violence, made the tyrannical author of their misery the instrument of bringing up that very infant, who was destined to be the deliverer of their unhappy tribes.

B. C. 1571. Amram, the son of Kohath, and Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, were blessed with two children, Miriam and Aaron, before the promulgation of Pharaoh's edict; but Moses being born some time after, and proving a beautiful child, the parents felt a more than ordinary reluctance to destroy him. They accordingly ventured to conceal him for the space of three months, till fearing the extreme danger of a discovery, which would have proved equally fatal to him and themselves, they enclosed him in a small ark of bulrushes, and committed him to the mercy of the waves, leaving his sister Miriam at a convenient distance to watch the event.

The little vessel was soon impeded in its progress by the reeds and flags with which the Nile abounds; and Pharaoh's daughter who was then walking by the side of the river, immediately sent some of her attendants to fetch it. Her surprise at the sight of so lovely an infant, bathed in tears and thus cruelly exposed, was soon converted to the most irresistible compassion. She doubted not but it was the child of some unfortunate Hebrew, who laboured beneath her father's tyranny; and her pity told her it was an indispensable duty to save him from the common ruin. At this moment young Miriam approached the princess, and obtained permission to fetch a Hebrew nurse to suckle the foundling; in consequence of which the happy Jochebed received the dear infant

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again to her arms, with a strict injunction to use him as tenderly as if he were her own. As the royal deliverer did not know the child's name, she called him Moses, to express the circumstance of his having been drawn out of the water, and dismissed Jochebed, with the promise of an ample reward, who immediately hastened home to impart her rapturous felicity to her beloved husband.

In process of time the child was taken to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him for her son, and caused him to be instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians. Moses had, however, received such excellent advice from his parents concerning the true worship of his Creator, that he made no other use of his princely education, than to confirm himself the more against the gross superstitions and idolatry of the courtiers. He accordingly preferred the reproachful name of an Israelite to all the honours which an impious sovereign could bestow; and he embraced every opportunity of visiting the sacred people, and relieving their oppressions to the best of his ability.

Having one day observed an Egyptian exercising some wanton cruelty upon one of the Hebrews, he was so exasperated at the outrage, that he instantly slew the oppressor, and buried him in the sand. This just revenge was executed so privately, that Moses imagined himself secure from the dread of discovery; but as he was endeavouring soon after to compose a quarrel between two Israelites, the more guilty of the two demanded whether he designed to murder him as he had killed the Egyptian. Finding, by this question, that the fact was known, and dreading the



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B. C. 1531. king's resentment, he deemed it imprudent to rely too much upon the protection of his adoptive mother, and accordingly fled with precipitation to the land of Midian. Whilst he was taking some rest after his journey, by the side of a well, the seven daughters of Jethro (priest of Midian) came to draw water for their flocks, but were insulted by the shepherds. Moses immediately espoused the cause of injured innocence, compelled the unmannerly shepherds to retire, and assisted the virgins in watering the flocks. On the report of this generous behaviour, Jethro invited the supposed Egyptian to his house, intrusted him with the care of his cattle, and after some time, gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage.

In this situation Moses continued forty years, without ever supposing Providence had designed him for the deliverer of his nation. At length, however, he was made acquainted with this important secret by the voice of the Almighty God, who vouchsafed to appear to him in a burning bush upon Mount Horeb. The divine vision called him by name, informed him that the appointed time was come for the deliverance of the Israelites, and charged him immediately to return to Egypt, and demand their dismission.

Moses started several objections, which the Deity condescended to obviate, and persisted so long in his ill-grounded excuses, that the forbearance of his Creator has been justly considered as a subject of equal wonder and admiration. Finding, however, at length, that his service could not be dispensed with, and having received the most ample assurances of protection, together with the power of working miracles, as a

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sanction to his great mission, he departed towards Midian to make suitable preparations for his journey, and to meet his brother Aaron, whom the divine Being was pleased to nominate for his interpreter, both to Pharaoh and the Hebrews.

Having obtained a friendly dismission from Jethro, he set out for Egypt with Zipporah and his two children, but a dispute arising respecting the circumcising of his youngest son upon the road, he sent his companions back, and pursued his journey with Aaron, who now met him, by the divine appointment.

On their arrival in the land of Goshen, B. C. 1491. they imparted their errand to the elders of Israel, and immediately proceeded to open their commission before the king; but the preamble, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel," sounded so strangely in his ears, that he was much surprised at their presumption, and peremptorily answered, he knew not the Lord, neither would he accede to their request. He then dismissed them with a severe reprimand, and immediately commissioned his task-masters to double the labour of the Hebrews; and instead of giving them straw to dry their bricks as usual, he caused them to be dispersed over the land in search of stubble; though they were strictly enjoined to fulfil their accustomed tasks without the most trifling abatement. This order being rigidly executed, induced the overseers of the Israelites to go in a body to the palace, in order that the king might redress their intolerable grievance; but he only accused them of being idle, and drove them from his presence with the most cruel indifference. In their return they were met by

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Moses and Aaron, whom they accused in the bitterest terms as the authors of these new calamities, which could terminate in nothing but despair and death.

Moses, knowing it would be in vain to attempt his own justification, or to offer consolation to the sufferers, in the present posture of affairs, applied to the Almighty, and expostulated with him, in the most humble terms, upon the ill success of his first message. The divine Being vouchsafed to repeat his former assurances of love and compassion towards the descendants of Jacob, affirming that he would soon cause the Egyptians to acknowledge his incomparable power, and promising to deliver the groaning Hebrews with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Moses was, however, so disheartened at his ill success, that he expressed a strong reluctancy to return to court to renew his demand in the name of the Most High; till he found himself compelled to obey the heavenly command by such miraculous gifts, reiterated assurances, and unequivocal declarations, as might justly have tinged his cheek with the deep vermeil of shame for his ill-timed doubt and timidity.

He now ventured, the second time, into the royal presence, accompanied by Aaron, and confirmed the truth of his assertions respecting his mission, by throwing down his rod, which was instantaneously changed into a serpent. Pharaoh regarded this miracle as the effect of magic, and accordingly sent for his most learned magicians, who likewise turned their rods into serpents, so that all the superiority Moses exhibited at this time was, that his rod swallowed up those of the Egyptians; a circumstance which Pharaoh might,

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probably, attribute to the skill or learning of their antagonist.

This miracle having made no impression on the Egyptian monarch, Moses stretched out his rod over the running and standing waters, which were immediately converted into blood. This metamorphosis was also imitated by the magicians, and Pharaoh's heart continued hard, and insensible to the divine reproof.

In consequence of the king's obstinacy, a third miracle was wrought, that of bringing upon the land such a vast multitude of frogs, that even the ovens, beds, and tables, of the Egyptains swarmed with these animals. The magicians found means to bring a fresh multitude of frogs into the country; but Pharaoh was sufficiently incommoded, to induce him to promise Moses, that the Israelites should receive their liberty when this annoyance was removed. Accordingly the frogs were all destroyed by the next morning; but whilst the people were employed in gathering them up in heaps for removal, lest they should breed an infection, the dishonourable prince was contriving how to elude the fulfilment of his solemn promise.

Moses, on discovering Pharaoh's duplicity, touched the ground with his miraculous rod, upon which the dust was transformed into innumerable swarms of lice. These odious vermin infested man and beast so severely, that the king sent once more for his magicians, that the exertion of their skill might remove his apprehensions. But their art was now exercised in vain, and they were compelled to acknowledge this miracle was wrought by the finger of God.

This calamity proving ineffectual, the air was,



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on the next day, literally filled with swarms of flies, whose bite was so venomous and painful, that the mischief they did to Egypt became intolerable, though none were found in the habitations of the Hebrews. Pharaoh was now alarmed for his personal safety, and sent for the two Hebrew chiefs, whom he first desired to sacrifice in the land; and then assured that Israel should depart on certain conditions, to obey the command of their God. Moses immediately obtained a reprieve for the kingdom, but the incorrigible monarch still retained his obstinacy, and again refused to accede to the promised liberation.

The sixth judgment was a grievous murrain, by which the greater part of the cattle, belonging to the Egyptians, died; whilst those of the Hebrews remained unhurt. But this not touching the king's person, another followed, which was more affecting, viz. a violent and painful boil, breaking out upon man and beast. The magicians were, according to custom, commanded to display the power of their enchantments; but they were themselves involved in the general calamity, and, therefore, durst not appear in the presence of Moses.

The king remaining inflexible, was now told that the voice of Israel's God should be heard in thunder, and his anger felt in such tremendous storms, as had not been known since the foundation of Egypt, unless he consented, before the next morning, to the departure of the chosen people. Moses accordingly lifted up his rod towards Heaven at the appointed time, and the awful prediction was immediately accomplished. The most terrific peals of thunder began to roll

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along the sky; the vivid lightning flashed incessantly from the clouds; and a miraculous shower of hail, mingled with fire, descended with such amazing force, that men and beasts were struck lifeless to the ground, shrubs and trees were torn from the roots, the flax and barley were utterly destroyed, and nothing escaped the common ruin, but the wheat and rye, which were not sufficiently grown.

This extraordinary visitation alarmed the proud monarch, who sent hastily for Moses and Aaron, and addressed them in such language as seemed to flow from a truly penitent heart: he earnestly entreated those dreadful thunders might cease, and the destroying shower be restrained; and solemnly promised, that Israel should instantly depart in return for so great a favour. Moses soon obtained a cessation of the plague, and many of the Egyptians, on examining the mischief occasioned by the hail, were inspired with sentiments of awe and veneration towards the God of the Hebrews. But Pharaoh persisted in his obstinacy and deceit, and consequently incurred other calamities.

A ninth curse was now predicted against the Egyptians, which should prove more fatal than the former; namely, such an infinite number of locusts as should literally cover the face of the country and devour every vegetable substance which had escaped from the hail. Upon this declaration, some of the courtiers took the liberty to represent to their sovereign the inconceivable damage his kingdom had already received; and observed, it was indispensably necessary the Israelites should be sent away in obedience to the command of their God. Pharaoh seemed to ac-

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knowledge the justice of their remarks, and sent for the Hebrew chiefs, to inquire who were to go, and who to stay ; but when he found that the *whole body* of Israel was demanded, he upbraided them with their evil intentions ; threatened them with the effects of his resentment, and caused them to be driven from his presence.

Moses had no sooner quitted the palace, than he waved his rod over the land ; a motion which was immediately followed by a strong east wind that continued all the night, and brought such multitudes of locusts by the next morning, as are said to have darkened the whole face of the earth.

The king was soon acquainted with the extent of this misfortune, as every blade of grass, and every herb that had escaped the storm, was now destroyed. He therefore confessed his fault, and solicited a reprieve, but his prayer was no sooner granted, by the locusts being blown into the sea, than he returned to his former pride and impenitence.

Shortly after the cessation of this plague, Egypt was smitten with such horrid darkness, that Moses has forcibly expressed it by " a darkness that might be felt." This affliction continued three days, during which the Egyptians were unable to discern each other, or to stir out of their houses, whilst that division of the land which was occupied by the Hebrews, enjoyed the usual influences of the sun. This mournful obscurity, which could not be removed by artificial lights, caused the most dreadful apprehensions in Pharaoh and his idolatrous subjects, and was so augmented by the piercing shrieks of the women and children, that the general consternation was inexpressible.

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At the first return of light Moses and Aaron were summoned to the palace; when the king told them he would grant their petition with respect to the Hebrews, and their respective families, but insisted that their flocks should be left behind. Moses expostulated upon the impropriety of this reservation for some time; and, at length, declared in express terms, the Israelites should take the whole of their cattle with them, and that not a single hoof should remain in Egypt. This bold assertion roused the indignation of the prince, who instantly caused them to be thrust out of the royal apartments; and vowed to revenge his next affront by putting them to death. Moses, nothing intimidated by his impotent menaces, signified to the king, that God would soon cause such affliction among the Egyptians, by destroying the first born of man and beast, that they should come with bended knees to the Israelites, and earnestly conjure them to depart out of the land. Having uttered this prediction, he retired to the land of Goshen, where he directed the Hebrews to celebrate the passover, and advised them to borrow jewels, raiment, and other valuables, from their Egyptian neighbours.

The destined hour of vengeance being come, and the houses of the Israelites properly marked * with the blood of the paschal lamb, God sent his destroying ministers through the kingdom to smite all the first-born, from the eldest son of

* The Israelites were on this night, to sprinkle the door-posts of their houses with the blood of the paschal lamb, that the destroying angel might recognise their dwellings, and pass them by without molestation.

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the king, to the first-born of the imprisoned captive, and even to that of the meanest animal in the land. This commission was executed with such rapidity and exactness, that Egypt was, at once, filled with the groans of the dying and the agonizing lamentations of the survivors. Pharaoh, the guilty cause of all this misery, sent immediately for Moses and Aaron, and urged them to depart from his dominions, together with their people of every description. The Egyptians were equally impatient for their removal, lest their longer delay should prove fatal to the kingdom; and the Israelites found it no difficult task to borrow a profusion of ornaments in the general consternation.

B. C. 1491. Moses, being thoroughly acquainted with the king's disposition, embraced the present opportunity with all possible haste, and gave the signal for departure long before break of day. He accordingly began his march at the head of six hundred thousand men able to bear arms, beside aged men, women, children, servants, and a great multitude of strangers, who accompanied the objects of God's peculiar favour.

On their arrival at Succoth, they were directed to encamp according to their tribes and families: and Moses was commanded to consecrate the first-born of man and beast to God, in commemoration of their exemption from the dire calamity of the Egyptians.

From Succoth they proceeded to Etham, near the borders of Arabia Deserta, which the Scripture distinguishes by the name of the Wilderness. But, next day they were ordered towards Pihahiroth, which is situated between the Red Sea, Migdol,

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and Baal Zephon. The Supreme Being now vouchsafed to guide their progress by a phenomenon, which in the night exhibited the radiance of a pillar of fire, and by day resembled a column of smoke; and this miraculous appearance never forsook them, till they had passed over into the Promised Land.

Pharaoh, who now began to repent his parting with the Hebrews, prepared a considerable army, with all the chariots of war that could be found in the kingdom, and marched with all possible rapidity to Pihahiroth, where he encamped in full view of the fugitives. This approach of so formidable an enemy struck a deadly terror into the hearts of the Israelites, who, instead of reflecting on that glorious manifestation of divine Power they had so recently beheld, or preparing to defend that liberty for which they had long groaned in vain, ran in a tumultuous manner to the tent of their conductor, and accused him of having brought them out to be slaughtered in the wilderness. Moses immediately applied for aid and direction to the author of his existence; and obtained so consolatory an answer, that he boldly assured his followers, this would be the last time of their seeing the Egyptians. "The Lord," said he, "shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

Having stretched out his rod over the sea, in pursuance of the divine injunction, Moses had the satisfaction to behold the waters divide and stand up in a heap on either side, while the pusillanimous tribes passed safely through to the opposite shore. The Angel of God, who guided them in the fiery pillar, now removed it from the front to the rear of the army, in which position

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it produced a double effect, giving light to the chosen people in their march, and spreading a deep gloom over their enemies, who resolved upon a close pursuit, though probably without the idea of launching into another element. By break of day, the Egyptians had such convincing proofs of God's resentment, that they turned suddenly about, and endeavoured to flee from the objects of their pursuit. This retreat was, however, rendered abortive; as Moses was commanded to stretch out his rod again over the sea, upon which the waves, hitherto miraculously suspended, rushed suddenly into their bed, and overwhelmed the impious king with all his forces.

Whilst the Hebrews contemplated this interesting scene with the mingled emotions of gratitude, awe, and astonishment, Moses composed an appropriate hymn of thanksgiving, and having divided his people into two great choirs, caused it to be immediately performed with the accompaniment of musical instruments.

The people had, however, scarcely travelled three days into the wilderness of Shur, before their excessive thirst, and the bitterness of the waters of Marah, occasioned them to renew their complaints against Moses. The Almighty vouchsafed to obviate their distress, by a miraculous operation on the source of the waters; and, after giving them some new statutes, conducted them to Elim, where their encampment was rendered extremely pleasant, by the immediate vicinage of seventy palm trees, and twelve salubrious fountains.

At the end of three weeks they quitted this agreeable spot, and marched towards the wilderness of Sin; where a scarcity of provision gave

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rise to the most ungrateful and impious murmurings. They had the audacity to insult their divine patron, by adverting to the flesh-pots of their late oppressors; and unanimously expressed their sorrow for having suffered Moses to decoy them, from the fertile land of Egypt, into a barren desert, where they expected to perish with hunger. Yet such was the love, the mercy, and incomprehensible goodness of their Creator, that, instead of expressing his holy resentment, as might reasonably have been expected, in some awful judgment, he vouchsafed to manifest his glory in the cloud, promising to rain down bread from Heaven, and assuring them that they should soon be supplied with an abundance of meat. This beneficent promise was in part fulfilled on the same evening, as a prodigious flight of quails came pouring down upon them from Egypt, and alighted in such numbers that they covered the camp: and on the ensuing morning Moses conducted the people to the place where a kind of white dew resembling a small hoar frost, covered the face of the ground. He informed them, this was the bread with which God had promised to feed them during their continuance in the wilderness, and commanded them to gather a certain quantity, for each person, every morning, except the Sabbath, which was to be kept holy.

A homer full of this miraculous bread, called *manna*, being preserved in a vessel as a memorial to future ages, the Hebrews proceeded, a few days, towards Mount Horeb, but repeated their former reprehensible behaviour, at Rephidim, for want of water. Moses endeavoured,



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for some time to inspire them with sentiments of humble faith and resignation, but their fury rose to such an ungovernable height, that he was compelled to apply to God for assistance and protection. He was accordingly commanded to conduct the rebels to Mount Horeb, which he immediately did; and by smiting the rock, procured an abundant supply of excellent water.

About this time Israel was attacked by the Amalekites. But a detachment under the conduct of Joshua obtained a signal victory over the aggressors; and Moses erected an altar, which he called Jehovah-nisi, *the Lord is my banner*, to intimate that God would crown the arms of his people with conquest.

The defeat of Amalek opened a passage to Mount Sinai, where the abode of the Hebrews was signalized by the promulgation of the decalogue, and the appointment of the principal ceremonies that were afterward observed by the Jewish nation. Mean while Jethro, with Zipporah and her two sons, was conducted by Providence to the Israelitish camp. The priest of Midian observing with what patience his son-in-law attended from morning till evening to the recital of the people's complaints; and fearing lest his strength should prove inadequate to the task, persuaded him to select a competent number of elders as inferior judges, whom he accordingly set over thousands, hundreds, or tens, and reserved none but the most important causes for his own cognizance.

B. C. 1491. Moses having received some important revelations from the great object of his worship, and ordered the encamp-

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ment in such a manner that a considerable space was left between it and Mount Sinai, directed the Israelites to sanctify themselves against the third day, for the glorious scene that was then to be exhibited.

At the appointed time they beheld the mountain enveloped with a dark cloud, whence issued forth such flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, as filled them with dread and astonishment. At the sound of the miraculous trumpet, Moses conducted them to the limits of their camp, and, in obedience to the divine command, went up with his brother Aaron into the midst of the cloud, while the congregated tribes observed the top of Sinai covered with fire and smoke, and felt its foundation shake beneath their feet. Soon after the disappearance of the Hebrew chiefs, the sound of the trumpet ceased, the thunder died away, and the voice of the Deity was distinctly heard, from the midst of the fire and smoke, to pronounce the ten principal commandments, which were to be the foundation of all the rest; while the people, astonished at what they saw and heard, retired to a greater distance. Moses now returned to the camp, and was received with every token of veneration by the Israelites, who unanimously promised to obey the divine laws; but earnestly entreated that he would for the future speak to them instead of the Almighty, lest they should die, with horror and amazement, at the repetition of those awful sounds, which had issued from the cloud. Moses commended their expression of awe and humility, and, having pacified their fears by some consolatory assurances, went up again to the mountain, where God was

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pleased to add a few ceremonial laws to the moral precepts of the decalogue, all of which were afterward given to the Hebrews in one body.

After this communication Moses built an altar, and offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings to his Creator; and having caused the contents of the holy covenant to be read to all the people, he ratified it by sprinkling the altar, the book, and the congregation, with the blood of the victims. He then ordered twelve pillars to be erected in remembrance of this sacred alliance between God and his chosen tribes: and conducted seventy of the elders of Israel, together with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, to the foot of the mountain, where they were indulged with a glorious vision of their divine Sovereign.

Moses now committed the care of the people to Aaron and Hur, and went up again into the mountain, to receive the decalogue, written on tables of stone by the finger of God; together with the plan of the Jewish tabernacle, sacred utensils, pontifical robes, &c. But the interval of his absence appeared so unaccountable to the short-sighted Hebrews, that they unanimously threw off their allegiance to the true Deity, and assembled in a tumultuous manner about Aaron's tent, telling him they were fully convinced that Moses was lost, and urging him to make them some gods, who might guide and assist them in their future progress. Aaron readily consented, and, having collected all their golden ornaments, formed a molten calf, and fixed it on a pedestal, exclaiming, "These are "thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of "the land of Egypt." An altar was likewise

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erected to the idol, and the next day appointed for a solemn festival.

At the expiration of forty days Moses descended from the hill of Sinai, bearing the two tables of stone in his hand; but when he came within sight of the camp, and perceived the apostate tribes dancing round the object of their gross idolatry, he was overwhelmed with confusion, and in the first transports of anger broke the tables, which contained the holy commandments. He then advanced towards his brother, whom he rebuked in the severest terms for acceding to the impious request of the multitude, and immediately caused the golden calf to be broken down, ground into powder, and thrown into the water. He also commanded the sons of Levi to slay all persons without distinction whom they found still at the feast, and spread so great a consternation through the tribes by his well-timed severity, that they were all convinced of their error, and began to dread the effects of God's heavy indignation: Moses, however, interceded so powerfully on their behalf, that the Almighty vouchsafed to indulge them with a free pardon; and promised, on condition of their repentance and future obedience, that he would send his angel to facilitate their conquest of the promised land, whence their enemies should be gradually driven out, till their possessions extended from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river.

To atone, in some degree, for their rebellion, and to express their gratitude for the merciful declarations of their God, the Israelites divested themselves of all their ornaments and gaudy



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apparel, and proclaimed a fast which was kept with the utmost strictness and solemnity throughout the camp, while their zealous conductor obtained a sight of the divine glory, or of the * angel under whose protection the people were to march towards the land of Canaan.

Moses, having remained on the Mount other forty days, and made two new tables to supply the place of those he had recently broken, presented himself again before the congregation, who were much surprised to observe such a radiant glory upon his face, that they were unable to look upon him till he had covered it with a veil. He now demanded a free-will offering of all sorts of materials for the tabernacle, sacerdotal vestments, utensils, &c. and was cheerfully supplied by the people with the richest jewels, metals, and other valuable things, including oils, ointments, and exquisite perfumes, which he distributed to proper workmen and artificers under the direction of Bezaleel and Aholiab, whom God had endowed with extraordinary skill and wisdom to execute all the different designs according to his express direction.

* As various passages of holy writ imply, that no one can see God and live, while others relate the appearance of the Supreme Being in the most familiar manner, it is requisite to observe, that the glorious person who appeared to the patriarchs and prophets was Jesus Christ, the second person in the blessed Trinity, who is spoken of by St. Paul as the *brightness of God's glory*, and the *express image of his person*; and who being in the *form of God* thought it no robbery to be *equal* with God. Vide Hebrews, 1 chap. and 3d verse, and Philippians, 2 chap. and 6th verse.

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This work was performed with such diligence and alacrity, that in less than six months the tabernacle, with all its splendid furniture and costly apparatus, was completed, and set up at the foot of Mount Sinai, where Aaron and his sons, after a solemn consecration, began to offer sacrifices upon the new altar according to the ceremonial law. B. C. 1490.

Aaron had not long enjoyed the pontifical dignity, before his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were struck dead by fire from Heaven; in consequence of their presuming to burn incense in the tabernacle with strange fire, in opposition to the command of Moses.

That rebellious disposition, which had been manifested on several occasions since the departure of Israel from the land of their cruel servitude, soon broke out afresh under temporary inconveniences, notwithstanding the frequent manifestation of God's incomparable love, and the recent calamities which were with difficulty obviated by the mediation of Moses. Thus a violent murmuring at Taberah, on account of a long march, occasioned the destruction of the extremities of the camp by a miraculous fire: an audacious complaint against the manna, with a tumultuous demand for flesh, was followed by a dreadful distemper, which swept vast numbers to an untimely grave, while they were feasting on an abundant supply of quails: an insurrection, resulting from mere cowardice and distrust, at the report of the spies * whom Moses had sent

* These persons extolled the richness of the promised land in the highest terms, and produced some specimens of its fertility in a large cluster of grapes, some fine pomegra-

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to examine the promised land, caused their heavenly patron to affirm, that none of them who were above twenty years of age, except Joshua and Caleb, should enter into that rich inheritance; but that they should wander about from place to place, till all their bodies should return to their native dust in the wilderness: and the rebellion of Korah called down such exemplary vengeance from the Most High, that the ringleader, with two hundred and fifty of his associates, who stood with their censers before the tabernacle, were destroyed by supernatural fire; while the families of Dathan and Abiram (other conspirators) were swallowed up by a partial earthquake, and fourteen thousand seven hundred other delinquents fell beneath the hand of the destroying angel, before Aaron could make preparations for a public atonement.

B. C. 1453. The Israelites, having wandered near thirty years in the desert of Arabia Petræa, removed from Ezion-Gaber to Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, where a fresh murmuring arose for want of water, and Moses was again commanded to bring them a fresh supply out of the rock, but he performed the operation in such a manner as was displeasing to God, who therefore excluded him and his brother Aaron from entering into the promised land. Here the Hebrews defeated Arad, one of the Canaanitish monarchs, and destroyed some of his towns; calling the field of victory *Kormah*, or utter destruction,

nates, figs, and other fruits; but at the same time represented the destined conquest as impracticable, on account of the strength of the cities, and the extraordinary stature and bravery of the inhabitants.

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though the total ruin of that country did not happen till the time of Joshua.

Their next encampment was at the foot of Mount Hor, on the borders of the land of Edom. Here Moses conducted Aaron and his son Eleazar to the summit of the mountain, and having stripped the former of his sacerdotal robes, in sight of all the people, transferred the office of high priest to Eleazar. At the conclusion of this ceremony Aaron died, and was buried on the spot: but the place was kept so private, that none of those countries could ever discover it. Miriam, the sister of Moses, expired soon after, in the hundred and thirtieth year of her age.

The fatigue of their next march, and a scarcity of provision, caused the people once more to murmur against their divine conductor, who immediately sent such large flights of fiery serpents into the camp, that multitudes of them died for their transgression, and the survivors were compelled with deep humility, to intercede for deliverance. Moses was then commanded to cast a brazen serpent, of the same figure with those that infested them, and to set it on a pole on some rising ground, that the sufferers might look upon it and be healed.

After several marches between the countries of Moab and Ammon, they came to the land of the Amorites, where Sihon, king of Heshbon, (having refused them a passage through his territories) was overthrown in a pitched battle, and utterly despoiled of his kingdom. Og, the king of Bashan, underwent the same fate upon a similar occasion.

About this time Balak, king of Moab, in compliance with Balaam's advice, or- B. C. 1452.

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dered his subjects to invite the Hebrews to a grand festival, where they were enticed from one crime to another by the most beautiful of the Moabitish and Midianitish women, till at length they did not scruple to bring a great number of these fair deluders to the camp. This transaction occasioned a plague, which carried off twenty-four thousand offenders. But the authors of the misfortune had no cause of triumph; as five of the idolatrous kings, who were in alliance with Balak, were put to the sword, and the Israelitish army took an ample revenge in burning the cities, massacreing the male inhabitants, among whom was Balaam, and carrying off a considerable booty, one fiftieth part of which was given to the priests, and a similar share to the Levites.

Moses was now commanded to take an account of all the children of Israel that were able to bear arms, whom he accordingly found to amount to six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty, beside twenty three thousand Levites. He also received orders to direct the distribution of the promised land among the tribes by lot, not into equal parts, but in proportion to the number of families in each tribe.

The numbering of the people being finished, God commanded Moses to ascend Mount Nebo, and take a view of that delightful land, from which he was excluded on account of his indecent deportment in the desert of Zin. The Jewish legislator obeyed, and, having received an intimation of his approaching death, endeavoured to settle the public affairs in the best order he could establish. He accordingly caused Joshua to be solemnly nominated for his successor; and directed the elders to build a capacious altar upon

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Mount Ebal, to set up the blessings and the curses of the Deity in the sight of all the people, and to appoint certain cities for the refuge of the man-slayer.

He then assembled the people, and recapitulated to them all that had happened since their departure from Egypt: enforcing the observance of the divine precepts by the most engaging motives, and endeavouring to deter them from disobedience by such menaces, as proved no less than prophetical of those miseries, which they, in the sequel, drew upon themselves.

Having thus fulfilled his last public duties, and delivered a duplicate of the law to be preserved in the ark, Moses went up to Mount Nebo and there died, in the hundred and twentieth year of his age. The inspired historian likewise observes, that his body was conveyed by the Almighty to a valley in the land of Moab, and there interred in so private a place, that no mortal was able to discover it.

The Israelites continued in their encampment near the Jordan, during the days of mourning for their legislator, and were only waiting for the signal to cross over into the promised land, when their new leader was honoured with some strong assurances of the divine protection and assistance. B. C. 1451.

He immediately employed two prudent persons to go, in character of spies, to the land of Jericho, that they might inform him accurately of the condition of the towns and inhabitants. These having crossed the river, went to lodge at the house of a woman called Rahab, who kindly undertook to conceal them from the king's officers, and, after confessing that all the Canaanitish nations were

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much alarmed at the approach of a people for whom God had done such great things, let them down by a rope from one of her back windows, which was contiguous to the city wall.

On the third day they returned to the camp with an account of their expedition, and informed Joshua, that they had given a solemn promise of protection to the family of Rahab, who had agreed to suspend a scarlet line from her window as a signal, at the reduction of the city. Joshua instantly improved the report, by assuring the Hebrews, that it was the Deity himself who had caused so universal a consternation among their enemies, and observing that they had now only to fight under his protection. He then reminded the two tribes and a half, that it was their duty to assist their brethren in the new conquests, but at the same time proposed, that half their men should be left to defend their families and recently acquired territories.

These arrangements being settled, and a proclamation issued for making due preparation for a removal, the priests began a solemn march towards the river, bearing the ark of the covenant, and followed by each tribe at a suitable distance. As soon as the feet of the consecrated conductors touched the brink of the stream, God caused the waters to divide for the passage of his people, agreeable to his promise of signalizing Joshua here, in as miraculous a manner as Moses was distinguished at the Red Sea.

During the time of their passing, the priests remained with the ark in the midst of the river, and waited the orders of their general when to join the rest of the camp. But Joshua, designing to perpetuate the memory of this superna-

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natural occurrence, caused them to remain in their position till twelve large stones should be laid in a heap in the place where the ark rested, so that they might be afterward seen from either shore, when the river was at its usual height. He also commanded, that twelve stones should be taken from the bottom of the river, to erect a monument on the bank. These orders being duly executed, the Israelitish army left the waters to resume their usual course, and marched towards the plains of Jericho.

The rite of circumcision, which had been omitted during the forty years wandering in the wilderness, was now renewed; and Joshua, having qualified his followers to keep the feast of the passover, was indulged with a heavenly vision, which, under the form of a warrior, gave directions for the siege of Jericho.

The Israelites having obtained an entrance into Jericho by the singular method alluded to in the history of Canaan, conveyed Rahab and her family into a place of safety; and then massacred the inhabitants without distinction; at the same time setting the buildings on fire, and levelling the city with the ground.

Joshua, foreseeing that a considerable time must elapse previously to the completion of the destined conquests, deemed it advisable to fix his head quarters in that fruitful plain, whence he might occasionally send detachments to invade other territories, till those of the Hebrews were sufficiently enlarged to admit of a distribution by lot, according to the will of Moses. He began by sending a party of three thousand men against the king of Ai, whose capital was about ten miles distant from Jericho: but



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they received so unexpected a repulse, that the congregation was much inclined to doubt their future success. Joshua, however, soon discovered, by the *urim*, that a sacrilege had been committed; and caused Achan, the guilty person, who had concealed some of the accursed spoils of Jericho, to be put to death in the adjacent valley, where a heap of stones was raised as a monument of his crime.

After this period, Joshua became so formidable to the Canaanites, on account of the miraculous events which happened in his time, viz. the passage of the Jordan, the stopping of the sun in its course, and the remarkable shower of hailstones, which has been already mentioned as tending to overthrow the confederate army of his enemies, that great numbers of them abandoned their native possessions, and emigrated into other countries, to elude the effects of his vengeance.

These circumstances consequently facilitated the conquest of the country, which was, in some measure, completed in less than seven years, and divided among the tribes, by lot, in the manner shown in the geography of Palestine.

## SECTION V.

*The Jewish History, from the Conquest of Canaan to the Foundation of the Monarchical Government.*

JOSHUA, having fulfilled his predecessor's request, in appointing the cities of refuge, and setting up the blessings and curses, together with an epitome of the Mosaic law, caused the

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two tribes and a half to be honourably dismissed, that they might return to their families.

These auxiliaries, previously to their landing on the other side the Jordan, erected an altar of a prodigious size, as a monument of their affinity to the other tribes, and of the miracles which the Almighty had wrought in their favour. This laudable design was however so far mistaken, that Joshua immediately called an assembly, and resolved to punish the supposed apostacy with all imaginable rigour: but on sending deputies to investigate the business, they received such an explanation as obviated their hostile designs, and gave universal satisfaction.

After this period Joshua governed the Israelites peaceably for the space of seventeen years, at the expiration of which time he assembled all the heads of the tribes at Shechem, and prevailed on them to renew their covenant with the true God, in the most solemn and public manner. Having caused their vows of obedience to be registered, and a monument erected in memory of the transaction, he withdrew from the concerns of the world, and expired soon after, in the hundred and tenth year of his age. His remains were interred in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-Serah, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

B. C. 1426. As a great part of Canaan remained still unconquered, and future acquisitions were indispensably necessary for the preservation of that part, which had been already divided among the Hebrews, it was deemed requisite to pray for direction, upon which the tribe of Judah was appointed by the Almighty, to commence the war. They accordingly

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marched, under the conduct of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, against the king of Bezek; routed his forces and took him prisoner; besieged Jerusalem, then inhabited by the Jebusites, with such vigour and resolution, that the city was soon pillaged and burnt, while the garrison fled for safety to the fortress of Zion; compelled the gigantic sons of Anak to provide for their security in the cities of Hebron, and Kirjath-Sepher; and struck such terror into the inhabitants of Ekron, Gaza, and Askelon, that they soon yielded their possessions to an army, which evidently fought beneath the banner and protection of Omnipotence.

Whilst, however, these zealous warriors were labouring for the security and aggrandizement of Israel, the other tribes neglected the express order of their law-giver, and contented themselves with laying their enemies under tribute, instead of extirpating them; by which means they were gradually induced to contract affinities, and to imitate their idolatrous practices, which had been frequently held up to their view as the objects of God's wrath and detestation. Such a defection consequently plunged them into many difficulties, and their perfidious tributaries became the instruments of their severe chastisement.

B. C. 1406. During the anarchy and confusion which succeeded this apostacy, the inhabitants of Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin, were guilty of so horrid a breach of hospitality towards an itinerant Levite, that the rest of the Israelites resolved to punish the delinquents with the most exemplary severity. They accordingly sent deputies to the chiefs of the

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tribe demanding the delivery of the Gibeathites; but finding themselves treated with contempt, they vowed to take a more ample revenge on Benjamin. Judah advanced to check their pride, in obedience to the injunctions of the sacred oracle, and, after being twice repulsed, obtained a complete victory, twenty-five thousand of them being slain, and six hundred compelled to flee for safety to the summit of the rocks of Rimmon.

The conquerors, having burnt down all the cities and villages, and massacred the inhabitants without pity or distinction, began to reflect with some remorse upon the supposed destruction of one of their tribes. They accordingly went up to Shiloh, and, receiving intelligence of the six hundred fugitives, implored the Divine advice respecting their restoration. There was indeed one great impediment in a rash vow they had made to withhold their daughters from marrying into that tribe: they however adopted an expedient, which, though sanguinary and unjust, answered their purpose. They sent twelve thousand armed men to destroy the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead, except the virgins, four hundred of whom were taken captive, and given to as many of the surviving Benjamites. But as two hundred men were still unprovided, they were advised to lay in ambush among the vineyards when the damsels of Shiloh came out to dance, and carry off such females as excited their admiration. By the adoption of these contrivances, the last tribe was soon restored to its former strength, and ever after continued firmly attached to that of Judah.



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B. C. 1405. The first punishment which the Hebrews received for their deviation from the holy commandments, was inflicted by the hands of Cushan-Bishathaim, who held them in subjection for the term of eight years, when they obtained a happy deliverance by the noble exertions of their valiant judge Othniel.

B. C. 1325. They were afterward enslaved by the Moabites, and remained beneath the yoke of that people eighteen years: at the expiration of which Eliud, their second judge, assassinated the royal oppressor; and, by that exploit, procured a peace of forty years continuance.

Shamgar, their third judge, espoused their cause against the Philistines, of whom he is said to have slain six hundred, with no other weapon than an ox goad.

After the decease of Shamgar, they proved so ungrateful for the recent manifestations of divine goodness, that God permitted them to be reduced by Jabin, king of Canaan, and retained in a cruel servitude, till they were brought to a due sense of their transgression. Two females were then raised up as the chief instruments of their deliverance, and Barak obtained a victory over the insulting foe, which was followed by another respite of forty years.

This stubborn and ungrateful race again provoked the displeasure of their God, and were justly punished with a fresh bondage, more heavy and cruel than any of the former, as they were now deprived of the privilege of a judge which was granted them even in the time of Jabin, were expelled from their habitations, and neces-

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situated to seek personal safety among the excavations of the rocks, while their unfeeling oppressors ravaged the country, and reaped the fruit of their labour. They were, however, at length delivered by the hand of Gideon, who, under the immediate auspices of Heaven, dispersed the Midianitish forces, slew the kings Zeba and Zalmunna, and enriched the wandering tribes with the costly spoil of the enemy's camp.

Gideon, at the period of his decease, left the Israelites in a peaceful and flourishing condition; but such was the depravity of their disposition, that they immediately abandoned themselves to the most gross idolatries, and repaid the services of Gideon with the blackest ingratitude. B.C. 1236.

Abimelech, a natural son of the deceased warrior, and a man of unparalleled ambition and cruelty, having bribed some profligate wretches to murder his brethren, the seventy sons of Gideon, was received by the Shechemites in the capacity of their ruler; and they accordingly proclaimed him king, in a conspicuous part of the plain of Shechem, expecting the rest of the nation to follow their example. Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, who had fortunately escaped the fate of his relatives, took this opportunity of addressing the tumultuous assembly from Mount Gerizzim. He first called their attention to an apologue, intended to dissuade them from their iniquitous enterprise; and then entered upon a bold expostulation, at the conclusion of which he fled to the city of Beer, in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Abimelech's government proved so oppressive to the Shechemites, that they soon formed

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a conspiracy against him; but he, having received intelligence of their design, came suddenly upon them, forced them into the temple of Baal Berith, and reduced the edifice to ashes. He then caused the city of Shechem to be levelled, and the ground strewed with salt.

From Shechem he marched against the inhabitants of Thebez (a city of Judah,) who had also taken up arms against him. The citizens, repulsed by his victorious troops, soon retired in consternation to a tower, where he thought to have had the satisfaction of consuming them by fire; but a woman threw a stone from the battlements upon his head, and delivered her people from the approaching ruin. Abimelech, thus suddenly deprived of the victory, and overwhelmed with confusion at the infamy of his accident, prevailed upon his servent Zebul to terminate his life with a more honourable weapon.

After the death of this usurper, the Israelites were judged by Tola, of the tribe of Issachar; and he was succeeded by a wealthy man, named Jair, who resided on the other side Jordan, and possessed an extensive territory in the land of Gilead.

The rebellious Hebrews soon returned to their iniquitous practices, and even multiplied the number of their idols, till they incurred a new calamity of eighteen years duration, under the combined oppressions of the Philistines and Ammonites. At length, however, their Creator vouchsafed to promise them a speedy deliverance, and Jephthah, the son of Gilead, prepared soon after to march against the enemy. Before he ventured to take the field, however, he made a rash vow, that if God would crown his at-

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tempts with success, he would, in token of gratitude, sacrifice the first living creature that should come out of his house to meet him at his return. This inconsiderate promise deprived him at once of the glory and pleasure of the ensuing action; for though the foe was utterly vanquished, and Israel enriched with the spoil, Jephthah's *only daughter* proved the unhappy victim of his imprudent vow. Hearing of her father's brilliant success, she advanced at the head of a company of virgins, to congratulate him, with timbrels and dances. Jephthah no sooner perceived, that the darling of his affections was the object he had solemnly vowed to destruction, than he rent his clothes in all the agony of paternal grief, and declared the mournful secret with the most pathetic expressions of a tortured heart. She listened with a surprising constancy, and only requested a respite of two months, during which she would retire with some of her beloved companions to the mountains, and there enjoy the melancholy satisfaction of mourning her untimely fate.

This dearly purchased victory had nearly proved fatal to Jephthah from another quarter, as he was scarcely returned to his habitation, when the Ephraimites assembled in a riotous manner, threatening to destroy both him and his possessions, because he had engaged the Ammonites without requesting their assistance. Jephthah, being of a rough disposition, reproached them so severely with their baseness and cowardice, that they proceeded from aggravation to hostilities, in which they were severely chastised for their ill-timed insolence.

Of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, the three suc-

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ceeding judges of Israel, nothing is related worthy of the reader's attention.

The magistracy next devolved to Eli, who united in his own person the dignities of judge and priest; though he is particularly remarked on account of his remissness and indolence. Under his government the Israelites were subjected to the Philistines, who treated them with all imaginable rigour, till Samson, the miraculous son of old age, was raised up for their deliverance.

The great actions of that extraordinary character, already related in a preceding chapter, might have inspired the tribes of Israel with courage to attempt a complete emancipation from their slavery, had not the criminality of their conduct precluded the possibility of success. Eli, their judge, was almost a hundred years old, and his two sons, Hophni and Phineas, took advantage of his debility to commit the grossest impieties and abominations.

The unpardonable remissness of the high-priest, who, being acquainted with their infamous profligacy, contented himself with giving them a gentle reproof, was so displeasing to God, that he sent a prophet to assure him of the most awful retribution, and to upbraid him with his ingratitude. The terrific sentence and similar upbraidings were afterwards repeated to young Samuel in a vision, and by him related to Eli.

The Israelites proving unsuccessful in an attempt against their oppressors, resolved to bring the ark of the covenant into the camp, expecting by that means to strike a terror into the hostile army, and inspire their own warriors with unusual courage; but the consequence of

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this imprudent project was, that they lost both the ark and the victory, and the two sons of Eli, who attended it, were both slain, according to the prediction of the Almighty. The old judge who waited impatiently to hear the event of his battle, no sooner heard the distressing news, than he fell backward from his seat and broke his neck: and the wife of Phineas, being thrown into labour on the same melancholy occasion, called her infant Ichabod, to signify *the glory of Israel departed*, and expired immediately.

The captive ark was carried in triumph to Ashdod, and placed in the temple of the idol Dagon, but when the Philistines entered the temple the next morning, they found their god fallen upon his face before the ark of the Lord. Attributing this humiliation to some common accident, they lifted him up, and set him in his original position. But on the second day they were much surprised to find the image in the same posture of veneration, and also deprived of the head, feet and hands, which lay upon the threshold. Soon after this occurrence, the inhabitants of Ashdod were so grievously afflicted by a dangerous distemper, that they resolved to keep the ark no longer among them. Having called an assembly of their rulers, they agreed to send it to Gath, on the supposition that Ashdod was unacceptable to the divinity. It was accordingly removed thither, but the same affliction followed it, and seized on every individual without distinction. It was then sent to Ekron, and soon after dismissed, by the council of the priests and divines, with suitable trespass offerings. Its wonderful and unexpected return to Beth-shemesh occasioned universal joy

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to the Hebrews, and a burnt sacrifice was immediately offered in the field where it stopped; but the solemn festival was soon changed into a general mourning by the irreverent curiosity of the Bethshemeshites, which prompted them to examine the interior of the sacred symbol. Fifty thousand and seventy persons were instantly struck dead for this presumptuous act, and the survivors were impressed with such terror, that they dispatched messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, requesting they would take the ark away. It was removed accordingly with due veneration, and placed in the house of Abinadab, whose son Eleazar was consecrated to become its keeper.

B.C. 1096. Samuel, who now acted in the double capacity of judge and prophet, embraced this opportunity of calling a solemn assembly for the express purposes of publicly renouncing those idolatries, which had for a considerable time withheld the wonted blessings of God, and for preferring the petitions of a contrite people in the hope of obtaining deliverance from their enemies. This meeting, which was held at Mezpeh, gave umbrage to the Philistines, who accordingly marched thither to dissolve it. But Samuel's prayers obtained such a storm of lightning and thunder, that the haughty foe was soon defeated, and chased with great slaughter unto Beth-Car. The strength of the Philistines was so effectually broken by this victory, that the objects of their late oppression enjoyed a profound tranquillity during the remainder of Samuel's government.

Samuel, after judging the chosen people with equal applause and integrity for the space of

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twenty years, had at length the mortification to find, that his two sons, whom he had made judges at Beersheba, were charged with the crime of corruption, and pronounced unworthy of succeeding him in his high office. At the same time the fickle-minded Israelites, forgetful of their Divine Ruler, and wearied of the government he had appointed, loudly demanded a king who might reign over them, and lead their armies to battle like the surrounding nations. Samuel was much surprised at a request, which evidently sprang from the blackest ingratitude towards the Deity; and expostulated with the petitioners on the darkness, impolicy, and dangerous tendency of their proceeding. His eloquence however was exhausted in vain; and he at length dismissed them (in compliance with God's command) promising to gratify their desire at a convenient opportunity.

This promise he soon accomplished by anointing Saul the son of Kish, by presenting him to the people as the man whom God had resolved to intrust with the care of Israel, and by causing him afterwards to be proclaimed *king* in a general assembly at Mizpeh.

## SECT. VI.

### *The History of the Jews under their Monarchical Government.*

B. C. 1095. WHILE the majority of the Israelites expressed their satisfaction at the elevation of Saul by loud and repeated acclamations of "Long live the king," a



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party of profligate persons affected to despise his youth, and peremptorily refused to acknowledge him for their lawful sovereign. But they soon received such demonstrations of his prudence, courage, and activity, as effectually silenced their defamatory assertions, and taught them to respect his newly-acquired power. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead * having sent an account of their dismal situation to the elders of Israel, Saul immediately caused a yoke of oxen to be hewn in pieces and distributed through all the tribes, with this message, that whosoever refused to follow him to the relief of Jabesh, should see his cattle destroyed in a similar manner. This threat occasioned so general an alarm, that the people hastened to Bezek to the number of three hundred thousand, beside thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah, and marched with such expedition against the inhuman Ammonite, that he was compelled to raise the siege of Jabesh the very next morning, and to flee with the utmost precipitation. The Israelites, elated with their success, and fascinated with the heroic deportment of their sovereign, advised him to put all those men to death, who had recently refused to acknowledge his authority; but Saul generously refused his acquiescence, and observed that it would be highly criminal to stain the commencement of his reign with such a massacre, after God had wrought so great a salvation among his people. This truly magnanimous answer confirmed the people in their loyal attachment to their leader,

* The inhabitants of Jabesh were at this time reduced to the utmost extremities by Nahash king of the Ammonites. Vide vol. 1. page 330.

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and the prophet Samuel, proposing to renew the kingdom by universal consent, caused him to be installed with great solemnity at Gilgal.

Samuel embraced this opportunity of justifying his administration, which now devolved upon Saul. He also convinced the people of their ingratitude in demanding a king, by recapitulating the wonders which their heavenly sovereign had wrought in their behalf, and by procuring an extraordinary storm of lightning and rain to corroborate his assertions. He however assured them, that his good offices should be continued towards them during the remainder of his life, and concluded his affectionate address with predicting felicity to themselves and their monarch, while they continued stedfast in the worship of God, and the heaviest effects of divine displeasure as the sure attendant upon defection and impiety.

In the second year of this reign the Philistines declared war against Israel, and encamped in the vicinage of Michmash. The sight of this hostile army, comprising thirty thousand charioteers, six thousand horsemen, and an innumerable number of foot soldiers, struck so universal a terror into the Hebrews, that, forgetful of their recent victory, and of the valour of their monarch, great numbers retreated to the caves and excavations of the mountains, while others fled to the other side of the Jordan, leaving their country open to the incursion of the enemy. To add to this misfortune, the Philistines had craftily deprived them of all kinds of weapons, and even of the instruments with which they used to sharpen their rural implements; so that when Saul came to assemble his little army,

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there was neither sword nor spear but in the hands of the king and his son Jonathan. Saul, however, resolved to continue at Gilgal, in expectation of Samuel's coming, but after he had waited seven days without receiving the expected visit, he ventured to offer some sacrifices by way of imploring the Divine protection. The victims were scarcely consumed, when Samuel appeared, and condemned his impatience in the severest terms, observing that his disobedience to God's command would cause the regal dignity to be transferred to a more deserving person. The prophet then departed towards Gibeon, and the king followed with the poor remains of his forces, consisting of only six hundred men, who beheld with unspeakable grief the approaching ruin of their land and nation.

In this posture of affairs, Jonathan accompanied by his armour-bearer, ventured to fall upon one of the enemy's out-guards, and occasioned such a confusion, that the Philistines immediately took to flight, and were pursued with great slaughter by Saul and his followers. This victory might have been more complete, had not the king imprudently adjured the army to take no refreshment in their pursuit. Jonathan, being ignorant of this charge, and wearied with the day's toil, refreshed himself with a little honey, which he found in passing through a wood, so that when his transgression was discovered, Saul would certainly have put him to death, if the whole army had not interposed, and sworn that not a hair of his head should be hurt, in consideration of the signal deliverance he had effected. The king returned home victorious, and soon put himself into such condition,

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that he not only pursued his conquest over the Philistines, but also triumphed successively over the kings of Moab, Edom, Zobah, and Amalek.

B. C. 1063. About thirty years after the sentence excision was pronounced against Saul, the prophet Samuel was commanded to go to Bethlehem, and anoint one of the sons of Jesse in the room of the reigning prince. He accordingly went thither on pretence of offering a sacrifice, and executed his commission by pouring the annointing oil on the head of young David, who was employed in keeping his father's flock.

Soon after this event, Saul began to be tormented by an evil spirit, or by a deep melancholy, to dispel which he was advised to have recourse to a musician, who might play before him during his indisposition. This advice was accepted, and young David, who had acquired great celebrity by his performance on the harp, was engaged as the minstrel. He accordingly exerted himself to gain the royal approbation, and swept the tuneful strings with such inimitable sweetness, skill, and pathos, that the monarch's disorder was soon apparently cured, and David was permitted to return to his pastoral avocation.

B. C. 1069. The miraculous victory obtained by this young shepherd over the gigantic champion of the Philistines, wrought so much upon the heart of Jonathan, that it gave birth to the most ardent friendship between them, insomuch that the Scripture says, "their souls were knit together." But Saul's admiration of that intrepid act was soon converted into jealousy by the indiscretion of a company of females, who extolled David above him in their



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songs of victory, saying that Saul had slain his *thousands*, and David his *ten thousands*. From that moment the king regarded Jesse's son as a dangerous rival, and began to look upon his life as incompatible with the security of the crown. He, therefore contrived various expedients, by which David might in all probability fall, and even gave him the princess Michal in marriage, for the express purpose of engaging him in the most hazardous employments. But the object of his hatred achieved such brilliant conquests, and conducted himself with such decorum, that these infamous projects were all rendered abortive; and David found in the person of his wife a tender and faithful friend, ever ready to warn him of her father's malice, and ever solicitous for his preservation.

David, having escaped assassination by a friendly artifice of Michal's, withdrew to Ramah, and thence to Naioth, whither he was pursued by his royal adversary; but the Almighty, by a miraculous effect on the spirit of Saul, gave him an opportunity of retreating unperceived. He then hastened to his beloved friend Jonathan, who had exposed himself to the indignation of the king upon his account, and had concerted a plan by which David might receive intelligence of all that passed at court. But as his death was soon resolved on by Saul, the prince hastened to the appointed place of meeting, and terminated the correspondence with the most affectionate vows of eternal regard and amity.

It was now indispensably requisite, that David should seek his safety in immediate flight. He,

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therefore, hastened to the land of Nob, and on the pretence of urgent business, prevailed on Abimelech, the high priest, to give him the sword of Goliath, and such refreshments as could be immediately procured for himself and the young men who accompanied him. Having obtained this supply, he fled to the king of Gath, but soon found it necessary to change his design of imploring protection, to the artifice of counterfeiting the actions of a lunatic.

While David, by this well-timed expedient, disappointed the malice of the Philistine courtiers, Saul was informed of all that had passed at Nob, by one Doeg, an Edomite, who asserted that Abimelech had furnished the fugitive with weapons and provision, and had inquired of God respecting his fate. This intelligence exasperated the king so violently, that he immediately ordered the high priest and all his kindred to be brought into his presence, where he loaded them with the most cruel invectives, and caused them all to be murdered without discrimination by his informer. He then sent a detachment to execute his vengeance on the city of Nob, who executed their orders with such inhuman severity, that none but Abiathar, one of Abimelech's sons, had the good fortune to escape the general massacre.

David was followed in his exile by his nearest relatives and the prophet Gad, who were soon joined by other distressed and discontented persons to the number of four hundred; but in consequence of the prophet's advice, he left his parents under the protection of the king of Moab, and repaired with his companions to the forest

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of Hareth in the land of Judah. Hence he removed to the wilderness of Ziph, where he was privately visited by Jonathan, who repeated his former vows of unalterable friendship, and obtained a solemn assurance, that if ever David ascended the throne of Israel, his good offices should be rewarded with the possession of the second dignity in the government.

The Ziphites, by sending intelligence to Saul, compelled David again to change his station, and he accordingly removed, first to the wilderness of Maon, and afterward to Engedi. At the latter place he was overtaken by his adversary, at the head of three thousand men; but Providence having directed the king to the cave where David lay concealed, an opportunity offered of terminating the unjust pursuit. David, however, abhorring the crime of killing the Lord's anointed, stole softly near Saul, and having cut off the skirt of his robe, permitted him to retire without molestation. As soon, therefore, as his enemy had quitted the cave, he discovered himself, and begged that he would no longer harbour such ill-grounded suspicions of a man, who had now given a convincing proof of his innocence and loyalty.

This affecting address, strengthened by the infallible testimony of the piece of his robe, melted the jealous king into tears, and induced him to acknowledge, that David's superior virtue rendered him truly worthy of that dignity, which he was now convinced the Almighty would bestow on him. He then requested him to swear, that he would never revenge the injuries he had received upon any branch of the

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royal family, and having embraced him with many expressions of affection, returned to Gibeah.

B. C. 1059. About this time Samuel died, and was buried at Ramah. He had judged Israel twenty years from the decease of Eli, and had lived about thirty-six after the elevation of Saul to the royal dignity.

David, having probably received some intelligence of Saul's relapse, removed from Engedi towards the wilderness of Paran. Thence he sent messengers to a wealthy Carmelite, called Nabal, who was making a feast to his sheep-shearers, requesting that he would send some provision for himself and his followers; but Nabal, being of a covetous disposition, returned an answer, which would certainly have caused the extermination of his family, had not his wife Abigail prudently eluded the mischief, by carrying in person the desired supply. Her husband being afterward acquainted with the extreme danger he had incurred by his churlishness, was immediately taken ill, and in a few days expired: a circumstance which induced David to take Abigail to wife, his former consort having been given by her father to another man.

Soon after this transaction David had a fresh opportunity of evincing his innocence at Maon, in the desert of Ziph, where Saul took the field against him with three thousand chosen men. The son of Jesse, accompanied by Abishai, entered Saul's camp in the dead of the night, and finding all the soldiers asleep, proceeded in search of the king, whom they at length discovered reposing in his tent with his spear stuck in the ground by his

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bolster, and Abner his general, and many other officers, sleeping around him. Abishai urged his master to transfix the king to the ground with his own spear, observing that Providence had delivered him into his hands for that purpose; but David refused to hearken to such counsel, and contented himself with carrying off the spear and the cruise of water that he found in the tent. Saul being apprised of this adventure, acknowledged himself indebted a second time for the preservation of his life to his generous son-in-law, and having expressed his sorrow for his former injustice, promised that he would no more seek his destruction, and parted from him with many tokens of apparent friendship. David was however justly alarmed for his future safety, and therefore retired to Achish, king of Gath, who received him in the most hospitable manner, and allotted Ziglag for his residence, as appears in a preceding chapter.

Saul, finding himself deserted by a great number of his forces, and being unable to consult his Creator respecting the event of his approaching engagement with the Philistines, went in disguise to Endor, and prevailed on a woman who had a familiar spirit, to raise up the prophet Samuel. When the vision appeared, Saul bowed himself to the ground, and apologised for his adopting so unlawful an expedient, by adverting to the desperate situation of his affairs. Samuel replied that it was in vain that he had applied to him for counsel after alienating the love of the Almighty by his disobedience; and solemnly assured him that he should on the morrow lose both his life and kingdom. A prediction which was soon verified, as the Is-

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B. C. 1055. raelites were utterly defeated in the ensuing battle, and Saul fell upon his own sword, to avoid the cruelty of his inveterate foes. His sons also perished in the dreadful slaughter, and their mangled bodies were exposed, with that of their unfortunate parent, upon the walls of Beth-Shan. But the inhabitants of Jabesh, remembering, with gratitude, their former deliverance by Saul, sent out a detachment of their bravest men, who carried off the bodies, and interred them with due solemnity.

David having lamented the death of Saul, and of his beloved friend Jonathan, removed to Hebron, where he was again anointed king of the tribe of Judah; whilst Abner, the late monarch's general, proclaimed Ishbosheth at Mahanaim. Thus was the kingdom divided between two sovereigns who enjoyed their respective shares quietly for the space of two years.

The first popular step which David took, was to send a message of thanks to the Jabeshites for the respect they had paid to the bodies of the deceased king and his sons; and he then strengthened his alliances, by marrying Maacah, princess of Geshur, by whom he had Absalom and Tamar.

At the expiration of two years, a battle was fought between the armies of David and Ishbosheth, in which the latter was totally routed, and Abner himself compelled to flee for his life. The pursuit continued till sunset, when the Benjamites rallied under Abner, and resolved to make a vigorous defence; but the trumpets of the adverse host sounding a retreat, they proceeded without molestation to Mahanaim,

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while Joab, (David's general,) and his followers, returned to Hebron.

Shortly after this engagement, Abner revolted from his allegiance, and went privately to king David, by whom he was graciously received. But on his return home he was slain by Joab, who pretended to revenge, by this treacherous act, the death of his brother Asahel. David was highly incensed at the base deed, and after venting his resentment in imprecations on the perpetrator, attended the remains of Abner to the grave with all the marks of unfeigned sorrow and respect.

The death of this general was soon followed by that of Ishbosheth, who was assassinated by two of his captains as he lay asleep in his chamber. The hardened regicides went immediately to Hebron, and presented David with the head of his rival, but he doomed them to execution, and caused their hands and feet to be hung up in a public part of the city, while the head of the ill-fated Ishbosheth was honourably interred in the sepulchre of Abner.

B.C. 1053. On the public report of these transactions, the tribes of Israel assembled, and unanimously agreed to acknowledge the sovereignty of David. They were, accordingly, received in the most gracious manner at Hebron, and three entire days were devoted to festivity upon that agreeable occasion.

Next year David laid siege to Jerusalem, and, by the excellent conduct and valour of Joab, obtained a decisive victory over the Jebusites, and carried by assault the fortress of Zion, which had hitherto resisted the united attacks of Judah and Simeon. This important place was now en-

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larged, fortified, and called the city of David, as being designed for the seat of the Hebrew monarchs, and the metropolis of Palestine.

The Philistines alarmed at David's increasing power, made a sudden inroad into Bethlehem, and garrisoned it with their own forces, before he was able to make suitable preparations against them. But their triumph was of short duration, as he soon afterward attacked them with such resistless fury, that they were never again in a condition to withstand him or his successors. The victor then entered into alliance with Hiram king of Tyre; erected a magnificent palace in his newly conquered city; and increased the number of his wives; by whom he had several children, subsequent to his removal from Hebron.

Grateful to his Creator for the wonderful deliverances he had experienced, and for the universal peace which now reigned through his kingdom, David was extremely anxious to make Jerusalem the centre of God's worship, by transporting thither the ark, which had remained almost fifty years at Kirjath-jearim. That sacred symbol was accordingly removed in a new cart from the house of Abinadab, while a numerous concourse of priests and Levites sang and played upon various instruments, and a multitude of people from all parts of the country thronged to behold the procession. This joy was, however, suspended by an accident which occurred at Nachon's * threshing floor, and the ark was de-

* The oxen that drew the ark happened to stumble at this place, and by that motion nearly overturned the carriage. Uzzah, one of Abinadab's sons, clapped his hand



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posited in the house of Obed-Edom for the space of three months; at the expiration of which it was borne by the priests with the utmost solemnity to Jerusalem, and placed in a sumptuous tabernacle, which the king had ordered to be erected for that purpose.

He afterward sent for Nathan to consult with him respecting a plan he had conceived of building a magnificent temple to the God of Israel, and the prophet at first applauded his pious design; but he was next day commissioned to inform the king, that he was deemed an improper person for such a work, as having been frequently defiled with blood, yet that he should leave a successor to his wealth and kingdom, who should execute his design with all imaginable splendour. David prostrated himself in gratitude before the Lord on receiving this message, and thenceforward began to lay up immense quantities of gold, timber, precious stones, and other materials, for the use of that son, whom God had promised to honour in so particular a manner.

David having made several economical arrangements in his household and army, and conferred some important favours upon Mephibosheth, the only son of Jonathan, was about the same time attacked by some forces of the Syrians, and grossly insulted by Hanun king of the Ammonites. The former were however so severely chastised for their presumption, that they earnestly petitioned for the privilege of becoming tributaries; and the latter were soon reduced to

upon the ark to save it, but to the astonishment of the king and all the assembly, he was immediately punished with death for his presumption.

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the extremity of distress by a detachment under the conduct of Joab.

B. C. 1035. During the siege of Hanun's metropolis, a circumstance transpired, which fixed an indelible stain on the character of David, and tarnished all the lustre of his former noble actions. Being enamoured of a beautiful woman, named Bathsheba, the wife of his valiant captain Uriah, he gratified his unlawful desires at the expense of reason, honour, and religion, and afterward contrived the death of the injured husband, who was then employed at the siege under the command of Joab.

The Almighty provoked at the commission of such abominable crimes, commanded the prophet Nathan to awaken in the royal offender a sense of contrition and humiliation, by a parabolical address, which might apply forcibly to the passions, and lead him to pronounce that judgment against himself, which he strictly deserved. The seer accordingly related the story of the poor man and his ewe lamb with such energy and pathos, that David hastily pronounced sentence of death against the person, who had been guilty of such horrid violence. But when the awful declaration, "Thou art the man," sounded in his ears, and Nathan predicted the heavy calamities which should ensue, he was at once abashed, afflicted, and dismayed. His strong and genuine repentance however procured an alleviation of his punishment, though the fruit of his adulterous commerce was smitten by the angel of death, and his unnatural son Absalom, on a future occasion, publicly requited the dishonour done to Uriah, by defiling the females of the royal family.

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After this period David was grievously afflicted by the evil dispositions and conduct of his children. Ammon his eldest son had scarcely attained his eighteenth year, when he committed incest with one of his sisters; and Absalom, fired with sentiments of revenge, soon contrived the assassination of the offender. The king mourned for some time the loss of his son, whilst Absalom sheltered himself from the effects of his wrath, in the court of his grandfather the king of Geshur. But after a considerable time had elapsed, he was recalled from his voluntary exile, and reinstated in his father's affection.

B. C. 1023. The treacherous prince having obtained a free pardon from his indulgent sovereign, procured a sumptuous equipage of chariots, horses, and running footmen, to attract the eyes of the people; and by an affected compassion for the distresses of those who came to the royal tribunal for justice, he contrived to spread an opinion through the nation, that his government would be more equitable, mild, and beneficial, than that of David. Having pursued this conduct till his infamous projects were ripe for execution, he obtained permission to pay a pretended vow at Hebron, where he had commanded the chiefs of his party to meet him, whilst others were instructed to proclaim him king, as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet.

David, upon the first intelligence of this infamous rebellion, left the care of his palace to his wives and concubines, and retreated with all possible speed from Jerusalem, into the open country. Among the little company who resolved to share the fortunes of their injured master, were the high-priests Zadok and Abiathar, at the head of

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several Levites, who attended on the ark of the covenant. The king, however, would not permit them to proceed with him, but desired them to carry the ark back to the city, whence they might send him intelligence of all that passed, and occasionally assist him with their counsel, whilst he concealed himself in some convenient part of the wilderness. As soon as the priests had departed in compliance with this advice, David was informed that Ahithophel, a celebrated politician, was gone over to Absalom; upon which he prayed earnestly, that God would confound the counsel of that statesman; and soon after repaired with his little troop to Mount Olivet. The march was inexpressibly mournful; the venerable monarch with his head uncovered, and his feet bare, ascended slowly; while his flowing tears and heart rending sighs evinced the acuteness of his feelings; and his sorrowful retinue, unable to offer consolation in such a trying moment, expressed their concern by the strongest expressions of unfeigned grief. When they had reached the summit of the eminence, and addressed their Creator in the language of humble supplication, they were joined by Hushai, who came to share the dangers and afflictions of his beloved prince; but at David's request, he consented to turn back and ingratiate himself into the favour of the usurper, that he might have an opportunity of thwarting the counsels of Ahithophel, and of giving timely notice of every thing, which should be resolved on among the rebels.

Proceeding on his melancholy route, David was met at the village of Bahurim by one of Saul's family named Shimei, who had the audacity to



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throw stones at him, accompanied with the most grievous curses. The king's captains, enraged at this unexpected indignity, earnestly entreated permission to smite off the head of the inhuman persecutor; but David restrained them by observing, that since his own son laid wait for his life, it was by no means strange, that this Benjamite should vent his malice in such opprobrious terms. He also remarked that these curses might possibly come from his offended Maker, in which case they might be more effectually averted by patience and resignation, than by a sanguinary and ill-timed resentment.

Absalom, in the mean time, entered Jerusalem at the head of the conspirators, and having caused a pavilion to be reared up on the roof of the palace, violated his father's concubines according to the threatening prediction of the prophet Nathan. Ahithophel then desired, that he might be sent at the head of twelve thousand chosen men, to fall upon David's little army while they were exhausted with their flight. But Hushai argued against this measure with such eloquence, and adduced such plausible reasons for his dissenting from it, that his remonstrances were at length successful; and Ahithophel was so deeply mortified at the rejection of his counsel, that he rode home with all possible speed, and put a period to his own existence.

The faithful Hushai contrived to apprise David immediately of his impending danger, in consequence of which the old king crossed the Jordan at midnight, and next morning arrived at Mahanaim, whither several of his loyal subjects followed with a timely supply of provision, tents, and various necessary utensils. Absalom at the

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same time advanced against his father with an army under the command of Amasa, and formed an encampment in the land of Gilead.

David having distributed some refreshments, and made such arrangements as the urgency of his affairs would permit, divided his army into three bodies, under the conduct of Joab and his two brothers, who acquitted themselves of their commission with such bravery and zeal, that the rebel troops were defeated with great slaughter and put to flight: and their unnatural leader, being caught by his hair in the thick branches of a tree, and by that accident deprived of the possibility of escape, was transfixed with three arrows by the hand of Joab; flung into a deep pit; and covered with a heap of stones.

During these transactions David remained with a small reinforcement at the gate of Mahanaim, impatient to hear the event; but, in his heart, more solicitous for the safety of Absalom, than for his own security and re-establishment, insomuch that when he received intelligence of his death, he withdrew to an apartment over the gate, exclaiming in all the bitterness of anguish, "O Absalom! my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee!"

Joab ventured to reprove his extreme weakness, and expatiated so forcibly on the evil effects it might produce, that David was necessitated to conceal his affliction, and to present himself before the people with a cheerful countenance. As soon as he appeared at the gate of the city, his subjects of every description came flocking round him; and even the rebellious party strove to show him the utmost respect and veneration. Finding therefore, that all

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the tribes were desirous of recalling him to his metropolis, he requested the elders of Judah to escort him thither, and sent to assure Amasa, the rebel general, that if he would come over to him he should be chosen to that post, from which Joab was now dismissed. These arrangements, however, were productive of much mischief; as his partiality for the tribe of Judah occasioned such jealousy in the others, that they broke out into a new revolt; and the change in his army excited so violent a desire of revenge in Joab, that he embraced the first opportunity of assassinating the new general.

Sheba, the rebel chief, who had assembled all the malecontents by the sound of the trumpet, and bade open defiance to David and his adherents, soon retired to the city of Beth-Maachah, which was immediately invested by Joab. But on the first preparation for an assault, a woman appeared on the battlements, exhorting him to forbear any hostilities against a mother city of Israel, and promising that the head of the traitor should be thrown over the wall. The condition was cheerfully accepted: and Joab, having received Sheba's head, returned victorious to Jerusalem, and gained such universal applause,* that David judged it advisable to restore him to his former employment.

B. C. 1021. About two years after the suppression of this rebellion, Judea was grievously afflicted by a famine, which was designed to revenge the death of the Gibeonites, whom Saul and his sanguinary relatives had unjustly caused to be massacred. David was no sooner

* This business was undertaken by Joab without the royal command.

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apprised of the cause, than he proposed to make a satisfaction that might terminate the distress of his subjects, and accordingly delivered seven males of Saul's family to be put to death by the Gibeonites, after which the famine was stayed.

Subsequent to this transaction, David gained four successive victories over the Philistines; but had not long enjoyed the fruits of his success, before he brought a heavy calamity upon his kingdom by numbering the people. An action so displeasing to God, that the prophet Gad was immediately sent to court to propound, as a punishment, either a seven years famine, three days flight before the enemy, or three days pestilence. The king was now struck with a lively sense of his folly, and bitterly regretted his inattention to the prudent remonstrances of his counsellors. He owned the choice to be extremely hard; but, considering, that the calamities of war and famine were seldom felt so severely by the rich as by the poor, and knowing himself to have been the cause of the distress, he chose the pestilence as the most equal punishment, and as seeming most immediately under the direction of Heaven. The choice was no sooner made, than that distemper received the Divine commission, and spread throughout the land with such awful rapidity, that seventy thousand persons were destroyed before the expiration of the third day. It was now beginning to infect the metropolis, when David earnestly entreated, that he might expiate his crime in his own person, and that an innocent people might be spared. This humble supplication was graciously answered, and the king, having reared an altar on the threshing

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floor of Araunah, beheld a miraculous fire descend from Heaven and consume the victims, as a token that his Creator was reconciled to the land.

B. C. 1015. A continued series of wars, fatigues, and misfortunes, had so materially affected the king's health, that when he was about seventy years old no clothes could keep him warm; and his declining state induced Adonijah, the next in birth to Absalom, to make splendid preparations for his accession to the throne. But David, being reminded of his promise in favour of Bathsheba's son, and understanding the design of Adonijah, commanded Solomon to be nominated king, and proclaimed his successor by sound of the trumpet. These orders were executed with such speed, that the ambitious prince and his adherents were totally ignorant of what passed, till they were alarmed in the midst of their festivity by repeated acclamations of "Long live king Solomon." They then dispersed in the utmost consternation, and Adonijah hastened to take sanctuary at the horns of the altar. The young king being informed of this particular, sent him word, that if his future actions were equitable, his person would be secure; but that his next disloyal attempt would be punished with death. Upon the receipt of this message, Adonijah made proper submissions, and was permitted to retire to his house.

David finding his dissolution approaching, sent for his beloved son to bestow his last advice and instructions. He reminded him, that all the promises of God relative to his posterity were only conditional, and would be fulfilled in proportion to their obedience; recommended

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some old friends to his favour and protection; exhorted him to take vengeance on Joab, for the murder of Absalom, Abner, and Amasa; and reminded him, that the obligation of an oath, which had hitherto screened Shimei from punishment, would now be cancelled. Having thus expressed his most particular desires to his successor, the debilitated monarch expired, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and the fortieth of his reign. He left an immense treasure, exclusive of that designed for the use of the temple, and was interred in a magnificent tomb at Jerusalem.

Solomon, having acquitted himself of his father's last injunctions, sentenced Adonijah to death for an improper request, degraded Abiathar to the second rank of priests for his recent defection, and formed a powerful alliance by marrying the princess of Egypt. He removed soon after to Gibeon, where the ark was stationed, and offered a thousand sacrifices to the Almighty. Here the divine offer was made in a dream, of granting whatever he thought proper to ask. Solomon earnestly requested, that such a degree of wisdom might be given as might enable him to govern the children of Israel with suitable prudence and sagacity; and this modest petition was so pleasing to his Maker, that he was immediately endowed with such a share of wisdom, as had never been possessed by any mortal together with a promise of every earthly blessing, which he had judiciously overlooked.

The exquisite discernment of this monarch was soon exhibited to high advantage, in the sentence which he pronounced relative to the

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infant, that was claimed by two women; and his excellent judgment shone conspicuous in the choice of his counsellors and officers, the institution of his laws, the ceremony of his household, the strength of his army, and the multitude of his subjects. His immense wealth gave him such powerful sway, that he lived in the most profound tranquillity encompassed with magnificence, and rejoicing in the abundant blessings of Providence. Beloved by his friends, dreaded by his enemies, and highly esteemed by his allies, his treasury was constantly filled with rich presents and regular tributes; and so great a concourse of strangers flocked to his metropolis, that riches were accumulated by his subjects of all descriptions, till gold and silver seemed to have lost their value by their extraordinary abundance.

B. C. 1013. Having contracted with Hiram, king of Tyre, for a large quantity of fine timber, and a sufficient number of workmen, Solomon laid the foundation of the Jewish temple, in the fourth year of his reign, which was the second after David's death, and the four hundred and eightieth after the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian bondage; and that stupendous work was carried on with such dispatch, that it was finished in little more than seven years, in such a sumptuous manner, as far exceeded every other edifice then in being.

B. C. 1005. The ceremony of the dedication was performed with all imaginable pomp: the ark of the covenant was placed in the most holy place between the cherubim; the air rang with the sound of vocal and instrumental music; and the sacred cloud, which had for-

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merly overshadowed the tabernacle, visibly descended upon the priests, while they prepared the victims for sacrifice. The king then publicly dedicated the building to God in a devout prayer, and, having seen the offerings consumed by supernatural fire, pronounced a blessing on the assembly and retired.

After the completion of his father's grand design, the king erected two magnificent palaces, one for himself, and another for Pharaoh's daughter; rebuilt twenty cities in Galilee; surrounded his metropolis with a strong wall; and fortified all the places of consequence in Judea. He also built a navy at Ezion-Geber, and put it under the care of some skilful Tyrian mariners, who, together with a number of his own subjects, sailed to Ophir, and returned in about three years, richly laden with gold, silver, and precious stones; beside ebony, ivory, spices, and various curiosities.

Nothing has hitherto appeared in this Prince's life, that does not convey the highest idea of his wisdom, piety, and magnificence; but the latter part of his reign exhibits a melancholy reverse. Solomon, emphatically styled the Wise, beloved of his Creator and admired by all nations for his numerous virtues, became such a slave, in his old age, to the passion of love, that he married a surprising multitude of women, without distinction of country, faith, or family, and permitted himself to be seduced by them into all the gross and abominable idolatries of the age; insomuch, that the holy city was surrounded with altars, in open defiance to the God of Israel; and temples were erected in various places to dumb idols.



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This infamous defection was, consequently, displeasing to the Almighty; and Solomon was assured in a dream, that his successors should mourn the loss of the kingdom, as the result of his ingratitude, except the tribe of Judah, which would be left them in consideration of the sacred promise given to David. The effect of this awful denunciation is not recorded in Scripture, nor is there any farther account of this monarch, but that he died in the fortieth year of his reign, and about the fifty-eighth of his age; and was buried in the sepulchre of his royal father.

B. C. 975. Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, went, upon his accession, with his court, and the elders of all the tribes, to receive their homage at Shechem; but they refused to acknowledge his sovereignty, unless he would promise to redress some popular grievances, which had crept into the administration during the latter part of Solomon's reign. The king took three days to meditate on their request, but having listened to the advice of some rash youths, who had been brought up with him in ease and luxury, he answered the people in a haughty tone, that he designed to rule them with greater severity than his father ever exercised; and threatened to chastise the slightest murmur with scorpions instead of whips.

A reply so harsh, and unsuitable to a people who regarded themselves as the peculiar favourites of Heaven, occasioned an immediate revolt: and ten of the tribes, disdaining all further allegiance to the house of David, chose Jeroboam, an enterprising youth of the tribe of Ephraim, to be their sovereign. Judah and Benjamin,

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however, resolved to remain beneath the government of Rehoboam, whom they conducted with all speed to Jerusalem. An army was then raised to reduce the rebels to obedience, but on the assertion of the prophet Shemaiah, that this defection was strictly consonant with the Divine will, the intended hostilities were laid aside.

Jeroboam embraced the first opportunity of rebuilding Penuel and Shechem, which he made the seat of his residence. But he was still apprehensive that the custom of going thrice in the year to Jerusalem might, in time, reconcile his new subjects to the house of David. He therefore sacrificed religion to his security, and set up two golden calves at Dan and Bethel, the extremities of the kingdom, whither he ordered the people to repair with their offerings instead of going to the temple. He also built some idolatrous edifices, and selected priests for his imaginary deities from among the lowest class of the people.

At the dedication of the two calves a prophet denounced the destruction of the new altar by a future king of Judah; and as a proof of his divine mission, told the spectators that they should immediately witness an instance of God's displeasure. Upon these words the altar burst asunder, and Jeroboam's arm, then stretched out to seize the prophet, was suddenly withered. In consequence of his submission, however, his affliction was withdrawn, and the stranger departed hastily from the contaminated city.

Notwithstanding this miraculous event, and the awful threatenings of the prophet Ahijah, the king persisted in debauching the people

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from the worship of their Creator, and filled Israel with idolatry.

Rehoboam, in the mean time, built and fortified several places in Judah and Benjamin, while multitudes of persons, who abhorred the infamous practices of his revolted rival, flocked to his metropolis, and voluntarily renewed their former allegiance. But this weak prince, instead of expressing his thanks to God for the favourable turn of his affairs, abandoned himself to the most absurd idolatries, and even exceeded the abominations of the apostate Israelites.

B. C. 972. To reward these enormities, the Almighty stirred up a formidable enemy in the person of Shishak, king of Egypt, who took several fenced cities; reduced Jerusalem, and pillaged the temple and palaces of their most costly ornaments. After this disaster Rehoboam retained the regal dignity twelve years, and died in the eighteenth year of his reign.

B. C. 958. Abijah, the succeeding monarch, had no sooner ascended the throne, than he took the field with four hundred thousand men, and Jeroboam went out to meet him with an army of double that number. When the two kings were within hearing of each other, Abijah upbraided his rival with the baseness of his extraction, the grossness of his idolatries, and the extreme sinfulness of his conduct, in deluding the Israelites from the worship of their God. Jeroboam pretended to listen attentively to these just reproaches, but in the mean time had ordered a detachment of his forces to wheel round and surprise the enemy in the rear, while

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he should prepare for the attack in front. This base stratagem was immediately executed, to the consternation of Abijah's army; but at length the idolaters were put to flight, and Abijah pursued his victory with such success, that his abandoned competitor could not recover his strength for the space of three years.

B. C. 955. Asa, the successor of Abijah, was a pious monarch, who applied himself zealously to the work of reformation, and even deposed his own mother for patronizing idolatry. He also put his kingdom in a good posture of defence, by fortifying several important places, and entertaining a numerous army. His riches augmented so rapidly under the blessing of Providence, that he was soon enabled to adorn the temple with a quantity of gold and silver vessels to supply the loss occasioned by Shishak: and he utterly destroyed all the monuments of irreligion except the high places, which he endeavoured in vain to abolish.

In the second year of this reign, Nadab succeeded to the throne of Jeroboam, but no particulars worthy of notice are transmitted respecting him, except his adhering to the iniquitous practices of his father, and his being slain at the siege of Gibbethon by a man of the tribe of Issachar, called Baasha, who seized upon the kingdom and destroyed the whole race of Jeroboam, according to the threatening prediction of Ahijah.

B. C. 941. About fourteen years after Asa's accession, his kingdom was attacked by a numerous army of Cushites, under the command of Zera, an Ethiopian. The king of Judah was however by no means alarmed at



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their appearance, but, trusting to God for the event, marched boldly against them to Mereshah, where he overthrew them in a pitched battle, and returned victorious to Jerusalem. Having devoted a considerable part of the spoil to the service of his heavenly patron, he had the pleasure to hear himself encouraged by a prophet, and to see many of Baasha's subjects flock to his city, on the report of his justice and munificence. He died in the forty-first year of his reign, and was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat.

B. C. 930. Baasha is said to have continued the idolatrous practices of Jeroboam, notwithstanding he was the instrument of Divine vengeance against that family. He was engaged in hostilities with the king of Judah, when Jehu the son of Hanani was commissioned to threaten him with the heaviest effects of God's anger, in consequence of his disobedience and impenitency. Soon after this denunciation he expired, and left the kingdom to his son.

Elah had scarcely enjoyed the regal dignity two years before he was assassinated at Tirzah, where he dwelt, by Zimri, one of his officers.

Zimri's reign was but of seven days duration, yet in that time he found means to exterminate the whole race of Baasha. Omri, another officer, being chosen king by the army, hastened to attack the usurper in Tirzah; but before he could obtain admission, Zimri went into the royal palace, and having set it on fire, perished in the flames. Omri had another competitor in Tibni, the son of Ginath, whom one part of the

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people had elected to the supreme dignity, but he was soon slain, and Omri took possession of the kingdom.

Nothing farther is recorded of this prince, but that he built the city of Samaria on a hill of the same name; removed his court thither from Tirzah, and reigned twelve years in all the profligacy of his predecessors.

B. C. 918. Ahab, his son, ascended the throne in the thirty-eighth year of Asa's reign. His marriage with Jezebel, princess of Zidon, proved a constant source of wicked and idolatrous actions, as she was permitted to introduce the Zidonian worship, which consisted in human sacrifices and other abominable ceremonies.

Whilst Ahab and his wicked consort were defiling the land with their flagrant impieties, and putting all those to death who had the boldness to censure their conduct, Jehoshaphat, Asa's successor, was employed in restoring the worship of his subjects to its original purity. Having demolished every idolatrous vestige which remained at his father's decease, commanded a competent number of priests and Levites to instruct the people in the Mosaic law, and garrisoned all the most considerable places in his kingdom; he became so wealthy, prosperous, and powerful, that his neighbours sought his alliance; his tributaries regularly transmitted their payments to his treasury; and even his avowed enemies were too conscious of his strength to molest him.

Far different was the case with Ahab, whose apostacy had provoked the Most High to pour down the severest afflictions upon his country;

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and whose subjects had long groaned beneath the accumulated distresses of tyranny, war, and famine.

At the expiration of three years the prophet Elijah presented himself before Ahab, and their first greeting was such as might naturally be expected between a haughty wicked king, and a person distinguished for his zeal and piety. Elijah, however, eventually obtained his desire of gathering all the Israelites together at Mount Carmel, with all the priests of Baal, whom Jezebel maintained at her own expense. He then addressed the assembly on the subject of their religious practices, and boldly reproved them for halting between two opinions. "I," said he, "am the only prophet of the Lord that is "left, while the priests of Baal are four hundred "and fifty; let them, therefore, offer up a bul-"lock to the object of their worship, and I will "offer another to the God of Israel; and let "the deity, who testifies his acceptance of the "sacrifice by a miraculous fire, be henceforth "considered as the only true God."

The people having testified their approbation of this proposal, Baal's worshippers hewed their sacrifice in pieces, laid it upon the altar, and called upon their idol from morning till noon; but receiving no answer to their clamorous petitions, and being exasperated by Elijah, who told them to cry louder, for Baal was certainly a great god, and would attend to them unless he were asleep, or engaged in more important business, they cut themselves with knives till the blood ran down upon the ground; and leaped upon the altar which they had made.

The whole day having passed in this manner,

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Elijah, about the time of offering the evening sacrifice, reared up an altar of twelve unhewn stones, and laid the wood and victim upon it. He then caused a deep trench to be dug round it, and ordered the attendants to pour water upon the sacrifice till the trench overflowed. This being done, he addressed himself to God in fervent prayer, requesting that he would show himself before all the congregated tribes, to be the only God of the universe. His prayer was instantly heard; the long-expected flame darted suddenly from Heaven, consumed the victims, the wood, and the altar, and dried up all the water in the trench, while the spectators unanimously exclaimed "The Lord is the only God." Elijah, seizing the favourable opportunity, told them to give a proof of their sincerity, by taking the priests of Baal to the brook Kishon, and putting them to death for their vile and conspicuous imposture. The multitude readily obeyed this injunction, and Ahab made no effort for the preservation of Jezebel's favourites. But on his return home he acquainted her with the circumstance, in consequence of which she vowed to take ample vengeance on the author of it, so that Elijah was compelled to seek his safety in a precipitate flight.

In the eighteenth year of Ahab's reign, Samaria was invested by Benhadad, king of Syria, who came thither with fifty-two petty princes and a numerous army. The besiegers were, however, soon compelled to relinquish their design. Next year attempting to retrieve their credit, they were again defeated with considerable loss; and Benhadad narrowly escaped being taken prisoner in the city of Aphek: but upon

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his sending a submissive message, the conqueror received him cordially into his chariot, brought him to his pavilion, entered into an amicable alliance, and permitted him to depart without ransom. One of the sons of the prophets immediately came to Ahab, with his face horribly disfigured, and complained that a Syrian prisoner, who had been committed to his custody, had made his escape, and himself was now in danger of suffering death for his neglect. The king, without hesitation, pronounced him guilty of death; but the prophet discovering himself, informed him that he had passed sentence against his own life, and since he had suffered so powerful an enemy of Israel to go free, when God had delivered him into his hand, he must abide the consequence.

Shortly after these transactions Jezebel caused a Jezreelite, called Naboth, to be put to death on a false accusation, because he had refused to sell a vineyard, which Ahab was desirous of converting into a garden of herbs. But whilst the king was taking possession of the ground, Elijah presented himself before him, and predicted the awful calamities which this inhuman murder would bring upon him and his whole house; asserting that dogs should lick his blood on the spot where Naboth was unjustly slain; that Jezebel should be devoured by dogs; and all his posterity rooted out of the earth. This heavy sentence had such an effect upon Ahab, that he immediately rent his clothes, returned to his palace overwhelmed with grief, and, by his unfeigned contrition, obtained a gracious assurance, that the ruin of his family should not happen till after his decease.

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Jehoshaphat, having left the care of his kingdom to his son Jehoram, came to visit Ahab at Samaria, when that prince had resolved upon taking Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians. Being asked to assist in the enterprise, he readily consented: but desired that God might be consulted respecting the success of the proposed expedition. Ahab immediately caused four hundred prophets to be assembled at the gate of Samaria, and upon his asking the question, they all promised him he should prove victorious. Their eager assurances were not, however, satisfactory to the king of Judah, who begged that if there were any other prophet of the Lord, he might be sent for and consulted. Micaiah, the son of Imlach, was accordingly summoned to appear, though his well-known veracity had rendered him odious to Ahab. He being acquainted with the flattering promises of the other prophets, at first answered slightly, that the expedition could not fail of success; but, upon the king's adjuring him to speak seriously, he declared the battle would terminate in the defeat of the Israelites, and the death of Ahab; observing, that God had suffered the prophets to be possessed with a lying spirit to facilitate those awful events. The king was however so little awed by these assertions, that he rushed precipitately upon his fate; and Jehoshaphat being persuaded to accompany him, narrowly escaped with his own life. Ahab died by the wound of an arrow; and his generals, after sounding a retreat, carried his remains to the royal sepulchre in Samaria, while his ensanguined chariot, harness, and armour, were

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washed in a pool, and Elijah's prophecy was verified in the circumstance of dogs licking his blood.

Jehoshaphat having effected his escape, returned to Jerusalem, and endeavoured to retrieve his error by a more assiduous application to every thing that related to the worship of his Creator, or the felicity of his subjects.

B. C. 896. Ahaziah, who succeeded to the throne of his father Ahab, happened, in the course of the next year, to be so materially hurt by a fall, that his life was despaired of. In this affliction he sent a deputation to Baalzebub, the idol of Ekron, requesting to be informed respecting his recovery. The messengers set out *on* their errand: but were soon sent back by the prophet Elijah, with an assurance, that since the king had sent to consult the deity of Ekron in contempt of the true God, he should never leave his bed till he was carried to the grave. A prediction which was soon accomplished in the death of Ahaziah.

Jehoram, his brother, next took possession of the kingdom, and prevailed on Jehoshaphat to assist him in reducing the Moabites, who had for a considerable time been tributaries to Israel, but had revolted during the short reign of his idolatrous predecessor. The miraculous supply of water obtained by Elijah for the army, and the complete victory obtained over the rebels, have already appeared in their proper place.

Jehoshaphat, towards the close of his reign, saw his kingdom suddenly invaded by a prodigious multitude of Ammonites, Moabites, and other nations, who poured in with such rapidity, that they had advanced within thirty-six miles of Jerusalem, before their intentions were known

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at court. In this emergency the king proclaimed a general fast, and implored the Divine assistance in so humble and pathetic a manner, that the prophet Jahaziel was permitted to dissipate his fears, by an assurance of the most signal deliverance. Jehoshaphat, accordingly, marched out at the head of a small army, while the invaders, seized with a kind of panic frenzy, turned their arms against each other, and engaged with the utmost fury till they were all destroyed. Three days were now devoted to the removal of the spoil, and on the fourth the Israelites returned a solemn thanksgiving to Heaven, in a place which was afterward called the valley of Berakah, or *blessing*. Soon after this event, Jehoshaphat ended his days in peace, leaving a numerous issue under proper tutors, with appointments suitable to their rank.

B. C. 889. Jehoram no sooner found himself established on the throne of Judah, than he began to overturn all the pious regulations of his father, and to bring upon himself the heaviest curses of the Almighty. The commencement of his reign was stained with the massacre of his brethren, and of all the nobles who presumed to express their dislike of his abominable practices. His wife Athaliah, the impious daughter of Ahab, persuaded him to establish the worship of Baal in all parts of the kingdom; and the God of Abraham was totally disregarded.

Judah and Israel seemed at this period but one kingdom, and one scene of wickedness. They were both governed by kings of the same name; and both groaned beneath the same tyrannical oppression.



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The first token of God's wrath against the king of Judah was the final revolt of the Edomites, who had now sufficient strength to shake off the yoke, and to establish themselves under a king of their own choosing. This misfortune was soon after succeeded by an invasion of the Philistines and Arabians, who penetrated to the capital of Judea, and carried off an immense spoil, together with Jehoram's wives, and all his sons except the youngest. The king was afterward afflicted with an incurable disease in his bowels, which continued two years, and then put a period to his life in the most shocking manner, as Elijah had foretold in a letter some time before his assumption.

The prophet Elisha was in the mean time working wonders among the Israelites. He performed a miraculous cure upon Naaman, the Syrian general, and discovered all the secret designs of Benhadad to Jehoram, till the former advanced with a numerous host against Samaria, and besieged it so closely, that the inhabitants were reduced to the utmost extremities. How long the siege continued cannot be easily ascertained, but such were the effects of the famine occasioned by it, that an ass's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver, and the women were driven to the horrid necessity of eating their own children. At length, however, the Almighty vouchsafed to terminate these calamities, by causing a sudden alarm in the enemy's camp, and compelling the forces to flee with such precipitation, that they left their tents, provision, horses, and riches, for a spoil to the Israelites, whose wants were then so abundently supplied,

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that a measure of fine flower was sold for one shekel, and other articles in proportion, at the gate of Samaria.

Some time after this unexpected deliverance, Jehoram, having heard of Benhadad's assassination, and the usurpation of Hazael, resolved to lead an army against Ramoth-Gilead, which his father had in vain attempted to reduce. He prevailed on Ahaziah, king of Judah, to accompany him in the expedition, and actually succeeded in his design upon the city; but he was so desperately wounded in the attack, that he was compelled to return to Jezreel, while Ahaziah hastened back to Jerusalem, and Jehu was left to secure the place with a competent body of troops.

Elisha in the mean time commissioned one of the young prophets to anoint Jehu privately, and to tell him that God had exalted him to the kingdom of Israel, for the express purpose of executing the Divine vengeance against the impious family of Ahab. Jehu, being acquainted with this important secret, rode with all speed to Jezreel at the head of his men; and slew Jehoram at the vineyard, for which Naboth had lost his life. Ahaziah, who had come to visit the king of Israel, was also mortally wounded, and the iniquitous Jezebel was thrown from a window in the palace, trampled under foot by the cavalry, and afterward devoured by dogs.

Elijah's predictions being thus partly accomplished, Jehu sent letters to the chief magistrates of Samaria, who were intrusted with the education of Ahab's seventy sons, exhorting them to set one of their princes upon the throne, and fight valiantly for the confirmation of his authority: but they clearly perceived the true meaning of

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the message, and immediately resolved to avoid the effects of Jehu's vengeance by a voluntary submission. Upon the intimation of this design, he commanded them to put all the young princes to death, and to send their heads to him in baskets by the next morning. This sanguinary order was executed without hesitation, and Jehu caused the horrid present to be exposed to public view at the Gate of Jezreel, where he appeared to justify his proceeding, by reminding the people of the Divine sentence pronounced against Ahab's posterity.

Jehu having taken ample vengeance on various other persons of Ahab's kindred, together with the idolatrous priests and counsellors, departed from Jezreel towards Samaria, and in his way met with forty-two princes of the house of Judah, going to pay a visit to those of the house of Ahab, whom he immediately caused to be slain. After this massacre he invited Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, to accompany him to Samaria, that he might see his zeal against the worshippers of Baal.

On his arrival at the capital, Jehu caused a solemn feast to be proclaimed in honour of Baal, and ordered all the votaries of that deity to assemble on pain of death. But the temple was no sooner filled, than he sent in a detachment of troops, who cut the idolaters in pieces without mercy or distinction; after which the building was demolished, and all the idols and ornaments buried.

B. C. 856. The Almighty being pleased with this zealous obedience, sent to assure the new monarch, that his posterity should enjoy the kingdom of Israel to the fourth generation.

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But Jehu imprudently followed the politics of Jeroboam, and suffered the golden calves of Dan and Bethel to remain unmolested; so that his reign was embittered by several melancholy accidents, among which may be reckoned the loss of several frontier towns, and a cruel massacre of his subjects by Hazael, king of Syria. He died in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, and was buried in Samaria.

At the period of Jehu's most laudable and zealous exertions in behalf of the Jewish religion, Athaliah used her utmost endeavours to banish the worship of God from Judea. The death of her son Ahaziah, and of forty-two princes of his family, induced her to wreak her vengeance on the sad remains of the house of Judah. But the infant prince Joash was happily screened from her cruelty, and brought up in the temple by Jehoida, the high priest, till he was seven years old, when a sudden revolution terminated the oppressions of the people, and raised him to the throne of his ancestors.

During the life of Jehoida, the young king expressed an uncommon zeal for the worship of God; but that excellent pontiff had no sooner breathed his last, than the kingdom was polluted with fresh idolatries, and new altars were erected in every part of the metropolis. This ungrateful apostacy was however severely punished, as the Syrian king committed some dreadful outrages in Judea; and Joash was assassinated by his own servants during a fit of sickness.

B. C. 838. His son Amaziah succeeded him in the twenty-fifth year of his age, by which time Jehoahaz had left the kingdom of Israel to his son Joash. The young king of Ju-



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dah caused the murderers of his father to be put to death, and began his reign with every appearance of piety; but his signal victory over the Edomites puffed him up with pride, and his subsequent idolatries were punished with disgrace, captivity, and death. His body was carried from Lachish (the scene of his assassination) to Jerusalem for interment, and the crown devolved on his son Azariah.

B. C. 825. During the last years of this reign, Jeroboam the second seemed ordained by Heaven to restore the kingdom of Israel to its original grandeur. His long reign gave him time to execute that noble work, to which he was encouraged by his contemporaries, the prophets Jonah and Hosea. He took the Syrian capital, Damascus, and Hamath, with all their territories on both sides the Jordan; but the *particulars* of these conquests are unknown. He died in the forty-first year of his reign, and was buried with his ancestors in Samaria.

B. C. 772. Zechariah, the great-grand son of Jehu, succeeded to the throne of his father Jeroboam; thus fulfilling the Divine promise, that the kingdom should be governed by his family to the fourth generation. But from this time the reader may date the downfal of Israel, as the subsequent history is replete with treasons, murders, anarchy, and desolation. Zechariah had scarcely enjoyed the regal dignity six months before he was publicly slain by one of his own domestics, who seized the vacant throne, but at the expiration of thirty days was himself massacred by Menahem in Samaria.

Menahem, having assumed the ensigns of royalty, committed the most horrid cruelties on the

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inhabitants of Tirzah, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, who had refused to open their gates to his forces. He was soon after invaded by Pul, king of Assyria, and compelled to obtain a dishonourable peace at the price of one thousand talents of silver. The eleven remaining years of his life appear to have been spent in peace; and his son Pekahiah succeeded to the crown.

Judah in the mean time enjoyed a series of blessings beneath the excellent administration of Azariah, whose piety, conquests, arrangements, and institutions, overwhelmed his enemies with confusion, and raised his subjects to the summit of affluence and felicity. Yet this renowned prince forfeited all his honours by attempting to infringe upon the sacerdotal office, and to burn incence upon the sacred altar. This rash action was strongly opposed by the high-priest, at the head of eighty other zealous persons; but the infatuated king would not listen to their remonstrances, till he felt himself smitten with a leprosy for his presumption. He then hastened out of the city; resigned the sceptre to his son Jotham; and resided in a solitary house till the sixty-eighth year of his age, when he died, and was buried in a tomb adjoining that of his ancestors.

Pekahiah, the successor of Menahem, was assassinated, two years after his coronation, by Pekah, one of his generals, who ascended the throne about a year before Jotham was invested with the regal dignity in Judah. The characters of these monarchs were opposite, and their success consequently different. Pekah, by his wickedness entailed misery upon his subjects, and was himself punished with a violent death; whereas

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Jotham triumphed over his enemies, beautified the temple, fortified his metropolis, and, at last, died in the possession of his people's warm affection.

Ahaz was no sooner seated on the throne, than his impieties provoked the Almighty to punish him with an invasion by the combined forces of Israel and Syria. This circumstance threw him into the utmost consternation, and he appears to have expected no less than the total dissolution of the Jewish monarchy. He was however delivered from this calamity, according to the prediction of Isaiah; but his idolatries were so numerous, and his actions so inconsistent with those of his deceased father, that God was pleased to leave him to the mercy of his formidable enemies. The king of Syria, in order to recompense himself for his lost time at Jerusalem, recovered the seaport of Elath, expelled the Jewish inhabitants, and peopled it with his own subjects, and the Israelitish monarch had slaughtered one hundred and twenty thousand subjects of Ahaz, and taken two hundred thousand captives, when the prophet Obed prevailed on him to dismiss the prisoners with some tokens of humanity.

The Edomites and Philistines, embracing this favourable opportunity, invaded other parts of Judea; carried off many of the inhabitants; and recovered several towns of importance. In this extremity Ahaz applied to the king of Assyria for succours, and that monarch, being bribed with costly gifts, agreed to make a diversion in his favour against Syria. Having vanquished Rezin and seized upon his capital, Tiglath-Pileser received a visit from his Jewish ally,

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who was so much pleased with a heathenish altar at Damascus, that he procured a model of it, and, on his return to Jerusalem, caused a similar one to be erected in Solomon's temple. Ahaz offered sacrifices both there and in various parts of the city to the Syrian deities, till his death put a stop to those flagrant impieties, in the thirty-sixth year of his age and the sixteenth of his reign.

The political state of Israel was in no case more felicitous than that of Judah, as the revolution at the death of Pekah occasioned a kind of anarchy, that continued almost nine years, during which Hosea, the regicide, found it a difficult task to retain the diadem; but at the expiration of that time he began to reign more peaceably.

B. C. 726. Hezekiah, on his accession to the government, clearly perceived the source of Judah's calamities, and immediately exerted himself to remedy the growing evil. He accordingly opened the temple, which his iniquitous predecessor had caused to be shut; and repaired thither at the head of his nobles, to make suitable offerings for the sins of the nation. He then sent circular letters throughout the country, inviting his subjects of every description to present themselves before the Almighty at the ensuing celebration of the Passover; and pathetically representing to the idolatrous Israelites the benefits which would infallibly result from their joining the great congregation at that solemn festival.

Such laudable conduct in the sovereign, soon produced a visible effect on the populace, who demolished every idolatrous monument that had

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been reared in Jerusalem, and thoroughly purged their metropolis before the appointed festival. The circular letter had so good an effect, that the city was crowded with people, not only from different parts of the kingdom, but also from the division of the Israelites. The solemnity itself increased the public zeal, and all the relics of heathenish worship were treated with such contempt, that even the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the wilderness was broken in pieces, because incense had been formerly offered to it by the self-deluded idolaters.

Hezekiah, having effected this great reformation, and provided for the maintenance of the priests, levites, and musicians, according to the law of Moses, was blessed by Providence with such success, that he soon found himself in a capacity to attack the Philistines, and actually wrested from them all they had acquired during the reign of Ahaz.

Hoshea was, about the same time, employed in contriving the deliverance of his kingdom from the Assyrian bondage. But his measures were all frustrated by the policy of Shalmaneser, who secured the land of Moab, ravaged that of Israel, and closely besieged Samaria, for the space of three years, when it was reduced, and all the kingdom forced to submit to his victorious arms.

B. C. 721. Having levelled the metropolis with the ground, exercised the most inhuman cruelties upon the wretched inhabitants, and laid waste all the country, the invaders returned home richly laden with plunder, and accompanied by the ill-fated king and a great number of his subjects, who acknowledged too

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late the justice of an offended God, and the melancholy effects* of their disobedience. Such was the awful dissolution of the Israelitish kingdom, after it had existed two hundred and fifty-four years independent of Judah.

B. C. 713. Hezekiah, by refusing to pay the tribute which the Assyrians had extorted from his predecessors, drew upon himself so powerful an invasion, that he was compelled to apologise for his rash conduct, and to promise due submission for the future. A message of this nature, accompanied with a profusion of costly presents, appeased Sennacherib so effectually that he immediately withdrew his forces upon condition of receiving an annual tribute of thirty talents of gold and three hundred of silver. This dearly purchased respite was, however, of short duration, as the treacherous Assyrian sent his army, in a little time, against Jerusalem, under the command of Rabsaris, Tartan, and Rabshakeh.

In this emergency Hezekiah resolved to make the best preparation for a gallant defence. He accordingly fortified the city; laid in a good store of arms and provision; and caused all the fountains in the environs to be stopped, and the course of the brook Gihon to be turned another way, that the enemy might be distressed as much as possible for want of water. He then assembled all his chief officers, and earnestly ex-

* Many of the captives escaped into the kingdom of Judah, where they renounced their idolatrous practices, and became the subjects of Hezekiah; others fled for succour into Egypt; and a third division was sent by the Assyrians from Cuthah, to repeople the land of Israel, and these were called Cutheans.

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horted them to rely upon God for deliverance, without suffering themselves to be dismayed at the number or strength of the besiegers.

The king, being seized with a dangerous disorder, was exhorted by the prophet Isaiah to set his affairs in order previous to his approaching dissolution. But this awful warning was so ungrateful to the royal invalid, that instead of complying with it, he addressed himself in the most pathetic terms to God, earnestly requesting that his life might be prolonged; till at length the Almighty sent back the prophet with an assurance, that he should survive his illness fifteen years, and that he should soon be delivered from his formidable enemies. As a confirmation of these gracious promises, the sun's shadow went backwards ten degrees upon the dial of Ahaz, and in the course of three days Hezekiah was happily restored to health.

The Assyrian generals now presented themselves before the walls of Jerusalem, and demanded a parley. Hezekiah, accordingly, appeared on the battlements attended by a prodigious concourse of people, and Rabshakeh addressed them in an insolent manner, uttering the most opprobious language against the king, and even against the God of Israel, and threatening to reduce the kingdom to the most pitiable condition, unless they chose to avert the impending danger by voluntarily becoming the prisoners of Sennacherib. This haughty address was succeeded by a deep silence; but the invaders were immediately compelled to march into their own country, to defend their master's territories against the king of Ethiopia.

The fears of the people however were by no

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means calmed, as Sennacherib, previous to his departure from Lachish, sent a letter to Hezekiah, assuring him, that if he still persisted in his refusal of submitting to captivity, he would soon return with double fury against him, and make him repent his vain confidence in a God, who would most assuredly prove as impotent against his resistless power, as those of various other nations had hitherto proved.

The king had no sooner perused this impious epistle, than he went up to the temple, and spread it before his Creator, earnestly praying that he would fulfil his recent promise, and vindicate his honour against the blasphemous wretch, who had dared to class his adorable name with those of the heathen idols. To these petitions the prophet Isaiah replied by inspiration, that the Assyrians would certainly come against the city, but that God would espouse the cause of his people, and compel the insulting foe to retire with loss and disgrace to his own land, where he should perish by the sword.

Sennacherib soon returned to execute his threats upon the citizens of Jerusalem; but, before he had opened a single trench, or discharged an arrow against them, a hundred and eighty-five thousand of his soldiers were cut off in one night by a destroying angel. A judgment which induced the haughty monarch to hasten back to his own capital, where he was murdered soon after by two of his sons.

This wonderful deliverance, on behalf of Judah, transported Hezekiah beyond the bounds of prudence, and induced him to make an ostentatious display of his wealth before the Babylonish ambassadors, whom Merodach had sent to congratulate



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him on his recovery, and to inquire, particularly, concerning the prodigy of the sun's retrogression. This impolitic action was succeeded by a message from God, importing, that those very men, who had been now entertained with the sight of all his wealth and grandeur, should in a short time return to plunder the kingdom of all its ornaments, and even carry away some of the royal family, as captives, to their master. A denunciation which convicted the king so fully of his error, that he acknowledged the mercy of Heaven in permitting him to die in peace.

After a pious and equitable reign of twenty-nine years, Hezekiah expired in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and was buried with extraordinary pomp in the grandest sepulchre of the sons of David.

B. C. 698. Manasseh, his son and successor, was but twelve years old when he ascended the throne, and from his unfortunate accession we may date the downfal of the kingdom and religion. Whether he were naturally vicious, or deluded by the artifices of profligate counsellors, cannot now be easily determined; but his diabolical actions, and horrid sacrilege, exceeded those of his most wicked predecessors, and he is justly delineated in history as one of the most infamous and sanguinary tyrants, that ever dishonoured the titles of royalty. Not contented with worshipping Baal, erecting altars to the sun, moon, and stars, and encouraging his subjects to sacrifice their harmless infants to the idol Moloch, he introduced the vilest idolatries into the temple, and set up a graven image in the most holy place: as if he desired to drive the God of Abraham from his habitation, and to disclaim all the

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blessings that had been promised to humble and obedient worshippers.

Several of the prophets undertook to reprove these abominable crimes, and boldly asserted, that both king and people would be chastised with the most exemplary rigour; but their predictions only served to exasperate Manasseh against them, and induced him to add the most infamous cruelties to his former wickedness. As many as presumed to express the slightest discontent under his government, were instantly doomed to death; and Jerusalem was literally deluged with the mingled blood of prophets, priests, and nobles: till Providence put a stop to his tyrannical proceedings, by delivering him into the hands of the Assyrians, who loaded him with chains, and carried him to Babylon, where he was thrown into a dungeon by order of Esar-Haddon, king of Assyria, who had some years before obtained possession of Babylon, and was now sole monarch over both empires.

This melancholy reverse of fortune produced a genuine repentance in the breast of the king of Judah, whose heart-rending sighs, and earnest supplications for mercy, obtained a happy deliverance from that God who "delighteth not in the death of a sinner." How long his imprisonment continued, and by what means his freedom was obtained, are now unknown; but it appears, that from the greatest sinner he became the most humble penitent, and one of the best of monarchs.

On his return to his metropolis he exerted himself to remove all cause of complaint from his subjects, by cleansing the temple, restoring the ancient service, fortifying the city, and de-

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molishing the idols, groves, and altars, which he had reared in open defiance to the divine law. Having effected this needful reformation, he enjoyed the regal dignity thirty-three years after his emancipation from captivity, and died peaceably in the sixty-seventh year of his age. His remains were interred in his own garden, probably by his command, as his former atrocities had rendered him unworthy of the sepulchre of his ancestors.

B. C. 643. At the accession of Amon, the worship of God was performed with its pristine splendour and purity, and the generality of the people had triumphed over the demolition of their senseless idols; but so infatuated was this young prince, that he gave himself up to all the gross impieties of the heathen, and exhibited some convincing proofs, that he designed to surpass the early debaucheries of his father; on which account some of his chief officers assassinated him in the palace, before he had reigned two years. The citizens, however, rose in arms to revenge his murder, and bestowed the crown upon his son Josiah.

The universal depravity, which had overrun the kingdom during the short reign of Amon, required no less than a miracle to reform it, when Josiah, who was but eight years old, took the reigns of government. But as he had been promised, above three hundred years before, to work a greater reformation than had been ever effected in the land, the most sanguine expectations were conceived by the true worshippers of God respecting the effects of his administration.

B. C. 633. Having advised with his pious counsellors concerning his great design, and the most prudent method of accomplishing it,

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he issued out orders, in the sixteenth year of his age, for the destruction of all idols, and the pollution of all places, where his deluded subjects had offered incense contrary to the law of Moses. The graven images, altars, and other objects of superstition, were accordingly burnt to ashes or thrown into the river Kidron: the groves and high-places were strewed with dead men's bones; and all the priests who had assisted at any unlawful ceremony, were for ever excluded from their former functions and privileges. The king having witnessed the execution of his orders in Jerusalem, repaired to the Mount of Olives, where he demolished the altars that had been erected by his predecessors, together with those in the valley of Hinnom. Thence he proceeded to Bethel, and destroyed the golden calf, which Jeroboam, the first king of Israel had set up. In short, he made a circuit through both kingdoms, and returned to his metropolis with the satisfaction of having thoroughly purged them from every kind of uncleanness.

He then exerted himself to repair, in the most expeditious manner, the dilapidations of the temple; commanded the celebration of the Passover to be observed with the utmost solemnity; expelled all wizards and necromancers from his dominions; instituted courts of judicature in every convenient place; and strictly charged the magistrates, priests, and Levites, to enforce obedience to the divine laws, both by precept and example.

Josiah had swayed the sceptre over Judah thirty-one years in profound peace, when Pharaoh-Necho advanced against the Babylonians, as far as the city of Carchemish upon the Euphrates.



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The king immediately assembled a powerful army; and marched to the valley of Megiddo. Here the Egyptian endeavoured to dissuade him from his rash enterprise, by disclaiming the idea of committing any hostilities on the Jews; but Josiah, unmindful of his remonstrances, immediately commenced an attack, and received a wound, of which he died at Jerusalem in the thirty-ninth year of his age.

Jehoahaz, the youngest son of Josiah, being exalted to the throne by a powerful faction, began to give such early proofs of his iniquitous intentions, that the prophet Jeremiah was sent to warn him of an awful chastisement, which would assuredly follow his continuance in impiety. This timely intimation, however, was totally disregarded, and the thoughtless prince persisted in his folly, till Pharaoh-Necho dethroned him, in the third month of his reign; and having transferred the sceptre to his elder brother, on condition of receiving an annual tribute, carried him into Egypt, where he ended his days, according to the prediction of Jeremiah.

This signal proof of divine displeasure did not deter Jehoiakim from treading in the steps of his unfortunate brother, or the people from imitating his reprehensible conduct. Jeremiah was therefore commissioned to denounce the most severe judgments against the kingdom, unless they immediately acknowledged and reformed their abominable practices. But instead of profiting by his counsel, the ill-judging multitude seized him as a sower of sedition, and one who was guilty of death. This malicious accusation, however, was set aside by the nobles; and the prophet found a powerful patron in Ahikam, the son of Shaphan,

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who had formerly been in great authority under Josiah.

Four years after this transaction the Babylonish captivity was foretold by Jeremiah; who also commanded Baruk to write from his mouth the tenour of God's threatenings against his impenitent people, and to read them publicly in the temple on a solemn fast. Baruk obeyed; and some of the courtiers having taken the roll from him, carried it to the king; who no sooner understood the nature of its contents, than he flung it into the fire. The prophet was then commanded to write the same denunciations again, and Jehoiakim's impiety was punished soon afterwards by the arrival of the Babylonish army.

Nebuchadnezzar, having defeated the king of Egypt at Carchemish, marched directly against Jerusalem, which was soon reduced by his victorious arms. The temple was immediately despoiled of its richest ornaments; the royal palace was rifled; the most hopeful young princes were destined to serve at Babylon in the capacity of eunuchs; and all the choicest youths of the city were carried into captivity. Jehoiakim was permitted to remain as a kind of viceroy over his own kingdom, in consequence of his submission and promise of a yearly tribute. But at the expiration of three years he renounced his engagements, and drew upon himself the heaviest effects of Nebuchadnezzar's resentment. Judea was immediately overrun by hostile troops; upwards of three thousand inhabitants were made prisoners; and Jehoiakim's murdered body was left unburied without the gates of the capital.

Jehoiachin next assumed the crown of Judah, but his actions were so displeasing B. C. 599.

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to the Almighty, that his government was cut off in its very beginning. He had not reigned three months before he was alarmed by the approach of Nebuchadnezzar, who sent him and his whole court captive to Babylon; stripped the temple, palace, and treasury, the second time; and set Zedekiah upon the throne, after compelling him to promise a certain tribute, and to take an oath of fealty.

This new monarch, who was the son of Josiah, and uncle to Jehoiachin, proved as unmindful of the recent judgments, and as irreligious as any of his predecessors. He, however, retained possession of his kingdom some years by his regular payment of the stipulated tribute; during which time he received embassies from the kings of Moab, Ammon, Edom, Tyre, and Sidon. But he was at length persuaded to shake off the Babylonish yoke, and, by that means, hastened the total destruction of Jerusalem; as Nebuchadnezzar immediately advanced at the head of a numerous army, wasted the country, seized upon the most important fortresses, and laid close siege to the metropolis.

Zedekiah now perceived the fatal consequence of his rash enterprise, and sent to consult the prophet Jeremiah, whose counsel he had hitherto slighted; but the approach of Pharaoh-Hophra, compelling the invaders to raise the siege, he began to suppose the danger was past. This mistaken opinion, however, was soon confuted, by the return of Nebuchadnezzar, and the subsequent scarcity of provision. During this last siege, Jeremiah earnestly exhorted the king to avert the impending ruin by timely submission; but, instead of adopting this expedient, he at-

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tempted to make his escape by night, and was taken by the enemy, together with his guards and nobles. Nebuchadnezzar glutted his revenge upon the ill fated prince, by causing his children to be massacred before him, and then ordering his eyes to be put out, that no object might obliterate the impression of that terrific scene; and soon after this calamity he was sent to Babylon, where he died in close confinement.

The Jewish capital, after holding out for two years and a half against the most strenuous exertions of the besiegers, and the sad effects of a grievous famine, was at length entered by the Chaldeans on the 11th of the fourth month, answering to our 27th of July, in the year of the world 3416. The city was immediately pillaged of all its treasure; the sumptuous edifice, erected to the God of Israel, was reduced to ashes; the fortifications were utterly demolished; and the greater part of the buildings levelled with the ground: while the unhappy Jews were led in triumph to Babylon, except some few of the lower order, who were left to cultivate the land. The prophet Jeremiah, however, procured his liberty, and was permitted to reside with Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had left as governor over the miserable remnant of Judah. B. C. 588.

Such was the melancholy catastrophe of the Jewish monarchy, after it had stood three hundred and eighty-eight years from the revolt of the ten tribes; and one hundred and thirty-four from the excision of the Israelitish commonwealth.

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# CHAP. II.

## THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS, FROM THEIR RETURN FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS VESPASIAN.

### SECT. I.

*From the Return out of Babylon to the Death of Nehemiah.*

B. C. 556. THE Jews, having remained seventy years in captivity, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, were at length permitted, by the decree of Cyrus, to return to their native land, and to rebuild that sacred edifice which had been ever regarded as the immediate habitation of God, till reiterated crimes provoked his vengeance, and induced him to leave it defenceless to the enemy.

The king's edict was no sooner made public, than the chiefs of Judah and Benjamin, together with the priests and Levites, assembled, in order to revisit their beloved country. Their example was imitated by all * those who had a zeal

* It must be observed, that the men of *Israel* and *Judah* were blended together, from this time, under the name of *Jews*, as many persons of the ten tribes took this opportunity of returning to the land of their forefathers.

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for the God of Israel; and even those who preferred a residence in Babylon to the purposed removal, cheerfully furnished their brethren with such articles as were requisite either for their journey, or for the building of the temple and city.

The number of those who returned, under the conduct of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, amounted to forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, beside their servants of both sexes, who were in all, seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. Mention is also made of two hundred men and women singers, four hundred and thirty-five camels, seven hundred and thirty-six horses, two hundred and forty-five mules, and six thousand seven hundred asses.

By this account the reader may see how small the number was of those who returned, in comparison of those who chose to continue in Babylon. Even of the priests only four classes returned; but these, immediately after their arrival, subdivided themselves in such a manner as to make up the original number of twenty-four. The Levites, singers, and other officers of the temple, took up their abode in or near Jerusalem, that they might wait on the service of their God, by rearing up his altar, and preparing all things against the first solemnity; while the rest of the people were occupied in planning their future habitations, or in searching for such of their brethren as Nebuchadnezzar had left in the circumjacent country.

On the first day of the month Tishri, the new year was proclaimed by the sound of the trumpet; the 10th of the same month was the grand fast of expiation; and the 15th ushered in the feast

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of tabernacles, which was celebrated with the usual solemnities.

It was now unanimously resolved to commence the important task of rebuilding the temple: a voluntary contribution, therefore, was made by each individual according to his ability; timber was procured, and workmen hired, to execute the design with all possible dispatch.

B. C. 534. In the second month of the following year, the foundation was laid with great solemnity in the presence of the governor, the high priest, and all the congregation; while the air resounded with vocal and instrumental music, and the contemplation of God's mercy produced loud and frequent acclamations. These expressions of rapturous delight, however, were by no means general; as many of the priests and Levites, who had seen the sumptuous temple that was destroyed with their unhappy city, could not forbear uttering the most sorrowful lamentations, while they considered the inferiority of the present plan.

The Samaritans, whom Esar-Haddon, king of Assyria, sent from Cuthath to repeople the country from which he had carried the ten tribes of Israel, now tendered their assistance towards the completion of the new building. But when the Jews declined their proposal, alleging that it would be a dishonour to their nation, to admit strangers to a participation of their work; these pretended friends were suddenly changed into the most implacable enemies, and eagerly embraced every opportunity of vilifying and distressing their new neighbours.

In consequence of their malicious suggestions, the Jews were represented to Cyrus as a rebellious

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nation who would soon establish an independent monarchy, and shake off their allegiance to his crown, unless forbidden to proceed with their building. The work was accordingly stopped, in a great measure, during the remaining five years of Cyrus's life, and the reign of his successor.

On the decease of Cambyses, and the accession of one of the Magi, these accusations were renewed, and a decree was granted to put a *total* stop to the work, which had been hitherto slowly carried on, amidst various insults and obstructions; and when this decree was rendered void by the death of the usurper, the Jews were so effectually discouraged, that they did not evince the least desire to resume their enterprise, till a great dearth was sent upon their land as a punishment for their indolence and ingratitude. The prophet Haggai upbraided them upon this account, and assured them, that if they now applied themselves zealously to the work, God would not only bless their exertions, but would also make the glory of the second temple exceed that of the first. These promises had the desired effect, and the people cheerfully devoted their labours to the erection of the sacred fane, under the guidance of Haggai and Zechariah.

The envious Samaritans, emboldened by the success of their former misrepresentations, applied to Tatnai, governor of Syria and Palestine, informing him of the rapid progress which the Jews began to make in their building, and warning him of the evil consequences that would hereafter result from the increasing strength of that unruly people. The governor immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and demanded by what



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authority the work was carried on. Zerubbabel and Jeshua readily answered, by adverting to the decree of Cyrus, and producing the sacred vessels which that monarch had graciously restored for the express purpose of renewing the ancient worship. Tatnai having received so unequivocal an answer, deemed it expedient to refer the business to his royal master; and Darius, on the discovery of the edict in the palace of Ecbatan, issued out a decree, by which all the grants of the former were ratified, and a severe penalty annexed against such persons as should presume to obstruct or contravene it.

B. C. 518. This important decree * was no sooner communicated to the Jews, than the temple began to rise apace, and in the course of three years was happily finished. The dedication was celebrated with equal joy and solemnity, and an abundance of sacrifices were offered in token of gratitude and adoration to him who had vouchsafed to deliver his people from captivity, and to bring them once more to his holy mountain.

From this time they enjoyed a profound peace under their royal patron Darius, and Xerxes his successor; and in the reign of Artaxerxes, the husband of Esther, they received a beneficial visit from Ezra, a learned and zealous Jew of the house of Aaron, who obtained an ample commission to return to his native country with as many of his nation as were desirous of accompanying him.

* In memory of this decree, which was given at Shushan, the Jews gave the name of Shushan to the eastern gate of the outward temple wall, and set up a bas-relief of that metropolis over it, which remained till the time of Vespasian.

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On his arrival at Jerusalem, he delivered some offerings from the Persian monarch and nobles to the priests, and sent to acquaint the governor of Syria and Palestine, that the king had empowered him to reform or regulate all matters, whether of church or state. He then appointed judges and magistrates, who might take cognizance of all offences, and inflict such punishments as were agreeable to the law of Moses; collected and set forth a correct edition of the sacred books, restored the worship of the temple to its ancient form before the captivity, and revised the Jewish liturgy. He is also supposed to have changed the old Hebrew character for the more beautiful and commodious Chaldean, and to have inserted such clauses in the sacred history as were necessary for the explanation or illustration of the original text. He continued in the faithful discharge of his authority thirteen years, when Nehemiah received a commission to succeed him. Josephus asserts, that he was buried in Jerusalem; but other Jewish writers affirm, that he returned into Persia, and died there in the hundred and twentieth year of his age.

Nehemiah having arrived at Jerusalem with full power to repair and adorn both the city and temple, which were then in a dilapidated condition, assembled the heads of the people, and told them he would immediately put his commission in force. He accordingly gave directions for the building of the city wall, and attended the workmen so closely, that their tasks were completed in fifty-two days, notwithstanding the opposition of some treacherous Jews, who, at the instigation of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, endeavoured to discourage them by various me-

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thods, and finally obliged them to arm in defence of their undertaking.

The governor, understanding, in the prosecution of this work, that the poorer class, who bore the greatest share of the labour, had been so impoverished by continual extortions before his arrival, that they had been compelled to mortgage their lands, sell their children, and submit to a variety of hardships, upbraided the Jewish rulers in the severest terms for their covetousness and inhumanity, and exerted himself so successfully in the cause of injured innocence, that the wants of the builders were obviated, and their murmurings hushed to silence. The malicious intentions of the Samaritans also proved abortive; and the dedication of the wall was celebrated by the priests and Levites with the usual solemnities.

As Jerusalem was, at this time, but thinly inhabited, most of the Jews having fixed their residence in the adjacent country, Nehemiah found it indispensably necessary to settle a greater number of people within the walls. He, at first, prevailed on the higher class to build houses there, by which means they might avoid the thieves and banditti who infested the other parts of the land. He then agreed to accept all who chose to settle there, and, finally, took every tenth family by lot; so that the city, being well built, fortified, and peopled, began to resume some appearance of its pristine lustre.

Having thus provided for the safety of Jerusalem, Nehemiah turned his thoughts to the felicity of its inhabitants, which, he was well aware, would either increase or diminish in proportion to their obedience. He, therefore, ex-

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torted from them a general confession of their sins, and a solemn vow to rectify whatever was amiss in future; causing a collection to be made, at the same time, for the service of the temple; to which he himself generously gave a thousand drachms of gold, fifty dishes, and five hundred and thirty-two sacerdotal vestments.

These arrangements being made, and the tenour of his commission completed, he returned according to his promise into Persia, after possessing the government of Judea twelve years.

Such exemplary virtue, resolution, and munificence, united in the person of a governor, might have been reasonably supposed productive of much pious emulation; but he had no sooner quitted the city, than some abuses began to creep into the church and commonwealth, and increased with such dreadful rapidity, that in less than five years the temple was shamefully polluted; and the sabbath so totally disregarded, that the people threshed their corn, bartered with the Tyrians, and exposed their mercantile wares to sale, on that day, in preference to any other of the week; notwithstandng the frequent and earnest remonstrances of three considerable prophets, Haggai, Malachi, and Zechariah.

On Nehemiah's return, however, those abuses were corrected; the public worship, which had been intermitted, was fully restored; and frequent expositions of the Holy Scriptures were enforced, not only in Jerusalem, but in all other parts of Judea.

The length of his life after this reformation, and the place of his death, are equally unknown. Josephus however asserts, that he died in an advanced age. His character was rendered illus-



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trious by his zeal for religion, and the good of his countrymen; and the dignity of his office was supported by his magnificent hospitality.

After his decease the government was entirely changed; and Judea seems to have been joined to the prefecture of Syria, from which the high-priests received their authority.

## SECT. II.

### *The History of the Jews under the High Priests and Maccabees.*

B. C. 373. AS no further accounts are given of the Jewish nation in the *canonical* books, the sequel of their history must of necessity be founded on those of the *Maccabees*, with the assistance of such intelligence as may be drawn from Josephus.

Judea being now subject to the prefecture of Syria, and the administration of the Jewish affairs intrusted by the governors of the high-priests, the greatest part of those misfortunes that ensued may be justly attributed to a set of men who aspired to the pontifical dignity, more through motives of avarice and ambition, than any zeal for their religion or the welfare of their brethren.

About the thirty-fourth year of Artaxerxes Mnemon, Joiada was succeeded in the high-priesthood by his son Johanan. Some time after his investiture, he received a visit from his brother Jeshua, who asserted, that Bagoses, the governor of Syria, had promised to transfer the sacred dignity to him. A dispute immediately ensued, and

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Jeshua was unfortunately slain in the interior court of the temple. Bagoses receiving intelligence of this accident, upbraided the Jews severely with defiling the habitation of their God; and imposed a heavy fine upon the pontiff, which was not taken off till the death of Artaxerxes changed the face of affairs. The Jews were, however, by no means free from trouble in the reign of his successor; for Ochus, having subdued the greatest part of Phœnicia, carried his victorious arms into Judea; reduced Jericho, and sent a great number of the inhabitants into captivity. Ten years after this event Johanan died, and was succeeded by his son Jaddua.

The fidelity of the Jews to Darius the third, exemplified in their refusal of granting a supply of provisions to his enemy, drew upon them the resentment of Alexander the Great: but the impending danger was turned aside by the submissive behaviour of the priests; and the victorious prince, on his entering Jerusalem, commanded a profusion of sacrifices to be offered to the God of Israel. On his return to Alexandria, he settled a great number of Jews among his own subjects, and admitted them to an equal participation of all privileges and liberties. He was, indeed, highly provoked at the refusal of his Jewish soldiers to assist in rebuilding the temple of Belus; but their invincible constancy triumphed over his anger, and he generously sent them back to their native country. About four years after Alexander's decease, Jaddua left the pontifical dignity to his son Onias.

Upon the division of the Macedonian empire, Palestine became subject to all the revolutions and wars which Alexander's successors waged

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against each other; being successively invaded and oppressed by the Syrians and Egyptians. It was at first given to Leomedon the Mitylenian; but soon after invaded by Ptolemy, who took the capital on a sabbath day, and carried nearly one hundred thousand prisoners to Egypt: but the consideration of their loyalty to their former conquerors, and the strict regard they paid to their oaths, induced him to intrust them with the care of several considerable garrisons, and to confirm those privileges which had been granted to their nation by Alexander.

B. C. 320.

The Egyptian monarch was soon compelled to resign the possession of Judea to Antigonus, who marched against him with a powerful army. He, however, contrived to reserve the cities of Aa, Samaria, Joppa, and Gaza, and carried off an immense treasure, besides a multitude of inhabitants, whom he settled in Alexandria. His generous behaviour towards this people proved so alluring, that vast numbers flocked to his intended metropolis, from all parts of Judea and Samaria; preferring his government in a foreign country, to the perpetual revolutions which they experienced in their own.

B. C. 312.

The laudable generosity of this prince was imitated by Seleucus, who indulged the Jews with much the same privileges in Lesser Asia, as his competitor granted them in Egypt.

Soon after the recovery of Judea by Ptolemy Soter, the Jewish high-priest Simon died in the ninth year of his pontificate. The sanctity of his manners, and the integrity of his actions, had acquired him the surname of "the Just;" and his laudable exertions for the benefit of the nation have immortalised

B. C. 292.

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his character as a governor. He repaired and fortified the temple and city; caused a cistern to be made in Jerusalem, of such capacious circumference, that the author of Ecclesiasticus compares it to a sea; and rendered the most essential service to the worshippers of God, by finishing the canon of the Old Testament. He left an infant son named Onias, whose uncle Eleazar was substituted high-priest in his stead.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, on his accession to the throne of Egypt, resolved to confirm those franchises which his father had granted to the Jews; and being solicitous to obtain a copy of their sacred books to be translated into Greek, and deposited in his noble library at Alexandria, he strove to oblige them with many proofs of signal friendship. B. C. 284.

Some other contending monarchs evinced an equal desire to ingratiate themselves with the Jews, particularly Antiochus Theos, who granted to those of Ionia the same privileges with the Greeks. This prince maintained a sanguinary war against Philadelphus; but in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes he was dispossessed of the provinces of Syria and Cilicia, besides other cities of Asia. Euergetes, on his return from these conquests, visited Jerusalem, and offered a great number of sacrifices in acknowledgment of his success.

At the death of Eleazar, the high priesthood was assumed by Manasses, the uncle of Simon the Just, who left it to Onias in the thirty-sixth year of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The danger to which the Jewish state was reduced, by the sordid avarice of this pontiff, has been already shown in the history of Egypt. His B. C. 243.

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son and successor, Simon, was justly celebrated for his piety, zeal, conduct, and resolution; all of which were severely tried in the first year of his pontificate, as the Samaritans eagerly embraced every opportunity of wreaking their malice on the Jewish nation.

Ptolemy Philopater, having in the mean time succeeded to the throne of Egypt, was in imminent danger of losing Palestine, by the treasonable practices of Theodore, governor of Phœnicia, who had engaged to deliver that province into the hands of Antiochus. The plot was discovered; but Antiochus resolved to lead his forces into Galilee, and actually took several considerable cities on both sides of the Jordan. Ptolemy on the other hand, assembled a powerful army; and, next spring, compelled the invader to relinquish all his acquisitions.

The Jews immediately came forward to congratulate the victor on his success, and were received by him with many marks of favour. He soon after went to Jerusalem, where he offered a great number of victims, and made some considerable presents to the temple. But having conceived an unconquerable desire to penetrate into the interior parts of that sacred edifice, he incurred the indignation of the Almighty, who smote him with such a terror of mind, while he was forcing a passage through the priests, and the people were sending up cries to heaven in order to avert his design, that he was carried out, half dead, by his attendants. This judgment was, however, so far from bringing him to a due sense of his impious presumption, that he quitted Jerusalem with all the rancour of confirmed hatred, and soon took an opportunity of expressing his

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diabolical resentment in a most dreadful persecution against the Jews, who were at length delivered by the immediate interference of Divine Providence.*

On the decease of Philopater, his two competitors, Antiochus the Great and Philip of Macedon, united their forces to dispossess the young Epiphanes of his whole kingdom. On this occasion the Jews departed from their wonted loyalty, and submitted to Antiochus, who made a quick progress into Judea, and rewarded the voluntary services of the inhabitants with many extraordinary favours. B. C. 204.

Three years after this event, the high-priest Simon died; and was succeeded by Onias the third, a man of great piety, clemency, and prudence. In the eighth year of this pontiff, the Jews were deprived of a powerful friend, by the assassination of Antiochus; but his son Seleucus continued to patronise them for some time, and furnished all the expenses of their diurnal offerings out of his own treasury. Judea flourished in peace and plenty; the Mosaic laws were duly venerated; and the generality of the people enjoyed the incomparable blessings of content, till an unfortunate breach between Onias, and Simon the governor of the temple, introduced a series of vexations and calamities.

The *cause* of this misunderstanding does not appear; but the contest, whatever it was, grew to such a height, that Simon resolved to revenge himself by the most unlawful means, and accordingly hastened to inform Apollonius, the governor of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, that the temple of

* Vide vol. I. page 252.

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Jerusalem contained immense treasures, which might be seized at pleasure for the king's use. Seleucus was immediately apprised; and Heliodorus was commissioned to fetch the valuables from the high-priest.

B. C. 176. Heliodorus was received at Jerusalem with every mark of respect; and received for answer to his inquiries, that there was indeed a considerable treasure in the temple, consisting of the sacred utensils, and certain sums of money which had been deposited there for the widows and orphans of the Jewish community: but when the messenger insisted upon removing this property in obedience to the royal command, Onias resolutely declared, he would never consent to its alienation from the right owners, to the disgrace of himself and of that holy place, which was reverenced by all the world. This remonstrance proving ineffectual, and the ministers of the temple having exerted themselves in vain to oppose the execution of his design, the whole city was thrown into consternation, and the gates were ordered to be broken down for the entrance of the Syrians; but God, at this critical moment, vouchsafed to defend his habitation from defilement, and smote the presumptuous strangers with such a panic, that they fell down half dead.

When Simon perceived the ill success of his treacherous design, he endeavoured to enflame the minds of the Jews against their pontiff, whom he impudently charged with having invited Heliodorus to Jerusalem. This iniquitous assertion occasioned much party prejudice, and some effusion of blood; till at length, Onias went to Antioch, and laid his complaint before the king, who pronounced the sentence of banishment against his rival.

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Antiochus Epiphanes was scarcely seated on the throne before Jason, the brother of Onias, went to court, and procured the high-priesthood, at the price of three hundred and fifty talents. Finding how acceptable this money was to the king, whose treasury was exhausted by the large tribute paid to Rome, he offered him another sum of one hundred and fifty talents for the liberty of erecting a gymnasium at Jerusalem, with an academy for instructing youth after the Grecian manner; and for the power of making such Jews as he thought fit, free of the city of Antioch. These indulgences were readily granted; and Jason, on his return, procured a powerful party in opposition to that of his rival Onias.

Having erected the academies according to his design, he was joined by a number of persons, who, through a wanton inconstancy, became enamoured of the Grecian customs, and readily joined in the most indecent exercises. The freedom of Antioch was also considered as a valuable privilege, and rapidly augmented the number of his partisans.

Expecting to ingratiate himself more effectually with Antiochus, he sent, next year, a considerable sum to be expended in sacrifices to the Tyrian Hercules; and, soon after, received the king at Jerusalem with a magnificence proportionable to his ambition. His ill-acquired dignity was, however, soon wrested from him by his brother Menelaus.

This man having obtained the high-priesthood by the most servile flatteries, and an addition of three hundred talents to the price paid by Jason, returned exultingly to Judea, and raised a considerable number of adherents. The opposite party resolutely opposed, B. C. 172.



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and compelled him to retire to Antioch; but, on his informing the king that he designed to *abolish* the Jewish religion, and conform entirely to that of his country, Antiochus furnished him with a body of troops, who soon compelled his enemies to quit Judea, and take sanctuary in the land of the Ammonites.

But, while Menelaus was exerting himself to bring about a general apostacy from the true religion, he neglected the payment of the money promised Antiochus, notwithstanding the pressing importunities of Sostratus, receiver of the customs in Palestine. Being at length commanded to repair to Antioch, and finding that nothing but ready money could recover the royal favour, he caused the temple to be pillaged of the golden vessels, and sold them at Tyre, to supply his present exigence and future extravagance. Onias, who had been confined to the capital of Antioch ever since his deposition, received intelligence of this abominable sacrilege, and made such bitter complaints on the occasion, that Menelaus deemed it advisable to provide for his own safety by the murder of the good old high-priest, who was, accordingly, sacrificed to his resentment, near the asylum of Daphne, in the vicinage of Antioch.

This inhuman cruelty, exercised on a person so venerable both for his age and piety, drew the public indignation on the assassin; and even the king was so deeply affected, that he could not forbear weeping at the relation of the murder. Andronicus * was, therefore, doomed to expiate his crime by death; but Menelaus, his iniquitous

* Such was the power of corruption in the court of Antioch, that Andronicus, *one of the prime nobles*, consented to murder a pious and venerable man, for a certain pecuniary reward given by the traitor Menelaus.

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employer, found means to avoid punishment, and to maintain his credit some time longer, by the large sums which Lysimachus, his brother, and vicegerent, transmitted from Jerusalem.

The unparalleled violences that were used to raise money, excited a popular tumult, in which the guards of Lysimachus were put to flight, and himself massacred at the treasury of the temple: a deputation was then sent to Antiochus to justify the people's revenge, and to accuse Menelaus of the crimes that had occasioned so much trouble both in Antioch and Judea; but the accused party, having recourse to bribery, contrived to avert the impending storm, and to procure an order for the death of the deputies, whose powerful pleadings might have melted the hearts of barbarians. This infamous sentence was so displeasing to the Tyrians, that they honoured the bodies with a decent sepulture, though they durst not openly disapprove of the tyrannical proceedings of the court.

Jason, being informed that Antiochus had been killed in Egypt, resolved to attempt the recovery of his dignity; and, accordingly, made his appearance before the walls of Jerusalem, at the head of a thousand men. Having obtained admittance into the city, he revenged himself in the most sanguinary manner upon all whom he supposed to have been of the adverse party; but the news of the king's approach soon compelled him to fly the country. Antiochus was indeed advancing against the Jews, who had made some rejoicings at the report of his death; and on his arrival, he executed his cruel intentions so effectually, that within three days forty thousand persons were massacred, and as many sold for slaves. Not content with this B. C. 170.

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dreadful vengeance, he forced his way into the most holy recesses of the temple, defiled the sacred vessels with his impious hands, and caused every valuable article to be seized for his own use; besides one thousand eight hundred talents of gold and silver, which he took from the treasury. He then bestowed the government of Judea on a barbarous Phrygian, called Philip; and, having left the iniquitous Menelaus in possession of the high-priesthood, returned triumphantly to Antioch.

B. C. 168. About two years after these dreadful transactions, the inhuman tyrant renewed his cruelties, by commissioning Apollonius to enter Judea at the head of twenty thousand soldiers, to massacre all the male inhabitants, secure the women and children for sale, and plunder all the cities without distinction. Apollonius accordingly repaired to Jerusalem, and concealed his horrid design till the ensuing sabbath; but, when the citizens were all in profound quiet, or employed in the public worship of their Creator, he ordered his men to arms, and murdered all who fell in his way; even the temple and synagogues were deluged with the blood of the congregations, and every species of barbarity was perpetrated on an unfortunate people, who tamely submitted to death rather than profane the sabbath by taking up arms in their own defence. Every part of the city was then pillaged, the walls demolished, the most stately fabrics razed to the ground, and most of the houses reduced to ashes. The temple was indeed permitted to stand, but its service was totally abandoned; and the officers of Antiochus built a fortress opposite to it, so that they might easily sally out upon any persons who attempted to approach that polluted edifice.

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This persecution was not confined to the inhabitants of Palestine, but extended to all persons of the Jewish faith within the king's dominions; a decree being issued out for the abolition of their religion, under the severest penalties. There were indeed many, in different parts, who complied with the royal injunction, and consented to worship the gods of the heathen, either from motives of complaisance, self-love, or cowardice; but, in Judea, the most intrepid firmness and heroic resolution baffled the artifices of the tyrant's ministers, and triumphed over the most execrable barbarities.

Atheneas, a person well skilled in the heathenish rites, and justly branded for his cruelty, dedicated the temple of God to Jupiter Olympus, causing the statue of that idol to be erected on the altar of burnt offerings; and compelling the miserable Jews either to offer up their adorations before it, or to endure the most exquisite torments. Altars, groves, and images, were also set up in the other towns of Judea, and the inhabitants reduced to the same pitiable extremities.

Many of the Jews now deemed it prudent to quit their habitations; and, accordingly, retreated to the excavated rocks, where they subsisted on herbs, wild roots, &c. Some of these ventured to assemble in a cavern near Jerusalem, for the purpose of celebrating their sabbath; but Philip, the governor, having received intelligence of their design, caused them all to be put to the sword.

Antiochus hearing of the inflexibility of the nation, whom he earnestly wished to extirpate, and being exasperated at their boldness in defying his edict and punishments, resolved to visit Jerusalem, that his orders might be more rigidly



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executed, or the recusants tortured with more acuteness and ingenuity.

Immediately on his arrival, he satisfied his curiosity by ocular demonstration; and was much surprised to behold the undaunted courage of those who suffered for the cause of religion; but no consideration could induce him to abandon his unreasonable fury, nor would he listen for a moment to the dictates of humanity.

The first victim of his cruelty was the venerable Eleazer, a man universally respected on account of his advanced age, extensive erudition, known probity, and pious zeal. Being commanded to eat swine's flesh, he resolutely refused; and when the officers exhorted him to eat some unforbidden flesh, that the king might be deceived, he answered with becoming fortitude, that the most dreadful punishment was preferable to a dissimulation so unworthy of his years, and so dangerous in its consequence. He was therefore dragged to execution; and when at the point of death, he exclaimed with a loud voice, "Lord, thou knowest the agonies I endure in my body, but my soul rejoices in the idea of suffering patiently for thy law." The seven brethren, whose martyrdom is related in the same book, were then brought before the tyrant, and successively doomed to the most exquisite tortures; while they were encouraged with the hope of a glorious immortality by their pious mother, who was last of all sacrificed to the rage of Antiochus, and died with unshaken intrepidity.

Hitherto the Jews had suffered the most poignant afflictions in silent resignation, and submitted without resistance to the horrid barbarities of a tyrannical prince; but the offended Deity now

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vouchsafed to espouse the cause of his wretched people, and inspired some of his chosen servants with sufficient valour to attempt the deliverance of their brethren, the destruction of the heathenish idols, and the restoration of the primitive worship.

Mattathias, an eminent priest of the family of Joab, had retired to Modin, his native place (in order to avoid the sight of those impious irregularities which prevailed in the unfortunate metropolis,) when Apelles, one of the king's officers, came to exact the obedience of the inhabitants to the royal command. Having assembled the people with Mattathias and his five sons, he addressed himself to the priest in such language as seemed most likely to conciliate esteem, and promised the greatest advantages as the reward of prompt compliance: but Mattathias boldly replied, he and his sons would continue in their obedience to God, though every other member of the Jewish nation should conform to the king's edict; and added, that no consideration should prevail on them to abandon the religious practices of their ancestors. During this speech, the officers had persuaded some pusillanimous Jews to sacrifice their religion to their convenience, and had just prevailed on one to burn incence to an idol; when the old priest, calling to mind the Mosaic injunction, rushed upon the apostate and slew him; while his sons, fired with the same noble zeal, killed the king's officers, overthrew the idolatrous altar, and, running through the city, exhorted all who were zealous for the law of God, to follow them. Having by this means collected a considerable number of adherents, they withdrew to one of the deserts of

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Judea, in order to consult on the best means of providing for their defence. The recollection of those sufferings which had been recently incurred by their ill-fated brethren, induced them to pass a resolution, with the advice and concurrence of certain learned priests and rulers, that for the future it should be lawful to bear arms, in their own defence, on the sabbath day, if they were then attacked by the enemy. This decree was privately communicated to all the Jews in Palestine, and the adjacent countries; who, from that time, prudently resolved to oppose their inveterate foes at all times, and upon all occasions.

B. C. 167. Mattathias having received a strong reinforcement from different parts of the country, began to exert himself in the glorious cause he had undertaken. Such of the Jews as had apostatised from the true faith, were either put to death or compelled to seek an asylum in a foreign land: the enemy was struck with terror and amazement; superstition and idolatry shrunk from the revenging hand of justice; and the remnant of true worshippers were cheered by the returning dawn of celestial light; while the new-raised army marched from city to city, overturning the heathenish altars, demolishing the graven images, cleansing the polluted synagogues, and restoring the divine worship to its original purity.

These measures were crowned with such signal success, that a happy reformation had extended over a considerable part of Judea, in the short space of one year; and the zealous priest would, in all probability, have carried it to Jerusalem, had he not been prevented by death: but the important work which he left unfinished, was soon after completed by his heroic sons.

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Mattathias finding his bodily strength exhausted, called his sons about him, and in a pathetic speech reminded them that the *sins* of the Jews had introduced a series of heavy and calamitous oppressions; exhorted them to hazard their lives bravely in defence of their holy religion; and advised them to act in compliance with the counsel of Simon, the eldest brother, while Judas should be regarded as their general. Having thus discharged the duty of a dying parent, and earnestly implored a blessing from the Most High on all their undertakings, he expired in a good old age, and was interred at Modin, in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

## SECT. III.

*The Jewish History from Judas Maccabeus, to the Reduction of Judea by the Romans.*

JUDAS Maccabeus, succeeding his father in the command of the army, led forth his brethren against the foe so suddenly, that some of the strongest fortresses were easily reduced: the Syrians were chased from their most advantageous posts, and the apostate Jews retired in confusion; whilst those who had left their country to avoid persecution, embraced the present opportunity of returning, and enlisting beneath the banner of so valiant a general. B. C. 166.

Apollonius, governor of Judea and Syria, resolving to crush this dangerous revolt in its infancy, raised a considerable body of troops and marched against the Maccabean chief; but Apol-

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lonius was killed in the engagement, and his soldiers were compelled to seek their security in a precipitate flight.

Antiochus was so violently enraged at the news of this defeat, that he again denounced the most dreadful vengeance against the Jews: but his treasury was then so low, that he could not immediately renew the war; and before he could accomplish his design, Seron, another of his generals, was overthrown by Judas, and eight hundred of his followers slain on the field of battle.

Advice was immediately sent to the king of these particulars, together with an assurance that Palestine would be irrecoverably lost, if some steps were not immediately taken for its preservation. Orders were consequently given for the invasion of Judea, and the extirpation of its inhabitants; and an encampment was soon formed on the plains of Emmaus, by forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse soldiers, under the command of Nicanor and Georgias, two crafty and experienced captains.

Judas immediately addressed his army, consisting of six thousand men, in a bold but affectionate speech, wherein he recapitulated their recent successes, reminded them that their lives and possessions were at stake, and exhorted all those to quit the camp who were dismayed at the sight of a powerful enemy. On this occasion three thousand of the Jews basely forsook their leader, and retreated from the appearance of danger; but the remaining division, having implored the Divine assistance by fasting, prayer, and sacrifice, obtained a complete and easy victory over the Syrians; burnt their camp, and enriched themselves with the plunder.

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This brilliant success proved doubly advantageous to the conqueror, as it furnished him with arms and ammunition for his men, and drew fresh reinforcements from all parts of the country.

Timotheus, governor of the country beyond Jordan, and Bacchides, another experienced officer of the Syrian army, now united their forces, with a design to retrieve the late dishonourable defeat; but they were completely routed by Judas, who killed twenty thousand of their men in a pitched battle, and obtained a fresh supply of money and provisions. He soon afterwards took several important fortresses, and caused the spoil to be equally divided between his brave combatants and their sick or indigent brethren; whilst Nicanor fled to Antioch in the disguise of a servant, and endeavoured to excuse his disgrace by representing the Jews as altogether invincible.

Lysias, who was intrusted with the government during the king's absence, was justly alarmed at the intelligence he received from Judea; and accordingly hastened thither, at the head of sixty thousand foot and five thousand horse. At Bethsurah he was met by the Maccabitish general, and attacked with such intrepid resolution, that five thousand of his men were cut to pieces on the spot, and the remainder completely routed. He therefore declined a second engagement, and returned to Antioch with the design of augmenting his forces.

Lysias had no sooner quitted the province than Judas led his army towards Jerusalem, and caused that unfortunate city to be thoroughly purified. Such of the priests as had distinguished themselves by their zeal or sanctity, were commissioned to cleanse the tem- B. C. 165.

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ple from the abominable idols and other profane lumber of the heathens; the altar of perfumes, the table of shewbread, the golden candlestick and sacred vessels, were made anew out of the spoils of the Syrian camp; the most holy place was thoroughly repaired, and divine worship recommenced with all possible solemnity. During the feast of dedication, the front of the temple was decorated with a profusion of garlands, crowns, and other ornaments of pure gold; every house was illuminated and richly adorned; and the people, bearing branches in their hands in memory of having kept the feast of tabernacles whilst they sought an asylum from persecution *in* the dens and mountains, expressed their gratitude to God in appropriate hymns of thanksgiving.

There was yet one obstacle to be removed, viz. the garrison in the fortress over-against the temple; but as Judas was aware of the strength of the place, and conscious of his inability to blockade it, he contented himself with fortifying the holy mountain, and establishing such a guard as might effectually counteract the hostile attempts of the Syrians.

The report of these proceedings having spread to all parts with amazing rapidity, the neighbouring nations were so exasperated, that they unanimously resolved to murder all the Jews who dwelt among them, and waited impatiently for the arrival of Antiochus, that their combined forces might extirpate the persecuted nation. The latter part of their design was, however, happily frustrated by the death of the tyrant; and the minority of his successor afforded a *temporary* respite to the inhabitants of Palestine.

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The government of Cœlo-Syria being transferred from Ptolemy Macron to Lysias, Judea was again invaded by a powerful army under the conduct of that commander. Georgias also made several incursions with a body of strangers; and the Idumeans, who had seized on the most advantageous posts, exerted themselves to prolong the war. Judas immediately assembled his troops, and led them to Actabatene, where twenty thousand Idumeans were sacrificed to his resentment. From thence he marched against the people of Bear, who were defeated with equal facility; and, having reduced two strong fortresses, he crossed over into the land of the Ammonites, where he found a number of forces assembled under Timotheus, the Syrian general. Here he had several skirmishes, which tended to confirm the report of his extraordinary valour, and terminated in the reduction of the city of Jazer. B. C. 164.

Timotheus, in the mean time, collected a numerous army from among all the idolatrous nations; resolving, by one grand effort, to retrieve the honour of the Syrian arms. He had not, however, penetrated far into Judea, when the Maccabitish chief advanced to meet him, and obtained a complete victory; twenty thousand five hundred foot and six hundred horse being slain on the spot, while the general himself was compelled to fly for safety to the city of Gazara. Elated with this success, the Jewish combatants were easily persuaded to pursue their formidable enemy to his retreat, which was accordingly invested and soon reduced. Timotheus was put to death as the author of the public calamity, and his brother Apollophanes met with a similar fate.



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However advantageous these repeated conquests might be to the Jews who resided in Palestine, they proved fatal to many of their brethren in other countries. No less than a thousand individuals were inhumanly massacred in the land of Tob, while a considerable number were compelled to provide for their defence by flying to the fortress of Dathema, in the land of Gilead; and others were reduced to the utmost extremity in Galilee.

Judas, receiving intelligence of these particulars, convened a sanhedrim, in which it was resolved that he and his brother Jonathan should join the Gileadites with eight thousand men; that Simon, another of his brothers, should march to the relief of Galilee, and that Joseph and Azarias, his other brothers, should remain with the residue of their troops to defend Jerusalem.

In consequence of this arrangement, Judas crossed the Jordan, and received information of a sanguinary design formed against the Jews in Bosora, Casphor, Maked, Alema, and Carnaim. He immediately attacked Bosora, and, having freed his brethren, set fire to the buildings; then proceeding to Dathema, he dispersed the besiegers with great slaughter, and took the other Gileaditish cities in regular succession; till he had fully accomplished his generous intentions, and enriched his army with much spoil.

Simon, though greatly inferior in strength, was no less successful in Galilee. He vanquished his enemies in several rencounters, killed upwards of three thousand of their men, enriched himself with their plunder, and delivered the unhappy Jews from their oppression. But whilst this success attended the Maccabitish chiefs in Gilead

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and Galilee, Joseph and Azarias involved themselves in some misfortunes, by attempting to emulate the exploits of their valiant relatives, instead of acting solely upon the defensive, as Judas had expressly desired. They attempted to reduce the sea-port town of Jamnia; but their little army was overpowered by Georgias, and forced to retreat with shame and loss to Jerusalem.

Judas, in the mean time, penetrated into the southern parts of Idumea, and demolished Hebron, their famous metropolis, with all the neighbouring towns. He then entered the territories of the Philistines and Samaritans, in order to discourage them from joining the Syrians; and, having expressed his abhorrence of idolatry by destroying all the groves and altars in his route, returned triumphant to Judea.

Lysias had by this time assembled an army of eight thousand foot, and a considerable number of horse and elephants, with which he resolved to extirpate the Jewish nation, to repeople the land with heathens, and to satiate his avarice with an immense plunder. Animated with these ideas, he marched through the southern territories of Judah, and advanced with malignant fury against the objects of his persecution. But the Jews, having seen an equestrian figure on the road which seemed to brandish a spear against the invaders, were inspired with such extraordinary courage that they rushed on the Syrian camp without hesitation, and put eleven thousand men to the sword, whilst the rest betook themselves to flight. B. C. 163.

The defeated general was now fully convinced of his imprudence in attempting to carry on hostilities against an enemy who fought beneath the

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banner of the Almighty, and therefore sent some overtures of peace to Judas, promising they should be ratified by the king. Judas readily acceded to the proposal, and dispatched two of his captains to Lysias, with the conditions upon which he would sheath his sword. These were readily granted by Antiochus, and letters were sent to the Jewish senate expressive of his amicable intentions.

This peace, however, was by no means consonant with the inclinations of the Syrian generals, who embraced the first opportunity of attacking the Jews, and engaged the neighbouring nations to espouse their ill-grounded and unjustifiable revenge. Timotheus having entered the land of Gilead, Judas marched directly to the assistance of his brethren, but had scarcely proceeded nine furlongs before he was impeded by upwards of five thousand Arabian Nomades. A battle immediately ensued, and the freebooters were compelled to sue for peace, which they obtained in return for a considerable supply of cattle and provisions. Judas then hastened to cross the Jordan, and, after taking the city of Caspis and the fortress of Characa, proceeded towards the enemy's camp; but he had no sooner approached within sight than the Syrians were seized with so violent a panic that they unanimously took to flight, and actually wounded each other with their weapons in the hurry of their retreat. By this accident, Timotheus lost thirty thousand of his men, and those who escaped the *present* fury of their pursuers, were afterwards destroyed in the conflagration of the city Carnion.

Judas, having occasion to pass through Ephron in his way to Judea, sent to request permission

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for that purpose; but the citizens immediately walled up their gates, and prepared themselves for sustaining a siege. The general therefore issued out orders for scaling the wall, which, after a fierce assault, was carried, and razed to the ground; all the male inhabitants being massacred, and the females and children taken captive. From Ephron he crossed the Jordan to Scythopolis, where he inquired of the Jews how they had been treated; and on hearing them speak in favour of the Scythopolitans, he expressed his grateful acknowledgments to that people, and returned to Jerusalem about the time of Pentecost.

Another powerful enemy was yet to be encountered, Georgias, governor of Idumea, who had harassed the Jews for some time. Judas therefore advanced against him at the head of three thousand foot and four hundred horse; but the enemy fought with such fierceness and intrepidity that victory was for some time doubtful, and Maccabeus had the mortification to see several of his most gallant soldiers killed by his side: at length, however, his fervent prayers were heard; the Idumeans suddenly took to flight, and he was enabled to rally his forces in the adjacent town of Odollam. He then made himself master of some fortresses in Idumea, and, having wrested Azotus from the Philistines, returned home laden with plunder.

Shortly after his return from Odollam, Judas resolved to besiege the fortress of Acra, which still remained in the possession of the Syrians, and hindered many persons from resorting to the temple. The place was exceedingly strong, the garrison numerous, and the arms and provisions abundant; but the renegado Jews, who resided



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with the garrison, were well convinced that Judas would eventually effect his design unless relief could be procured: they accordingly persuaded the commander to make a vigorous sally, in order to enable some of their brethren to repair to Antioch with the news of their distress; and their scheme proved so successful, that the Syrian monarch immediately commanded his generals to march into Judea with all the forces they could assemble, and afterwards resolved to accompany them in person.

An army was immediately drawn together, consisting of a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, thirty-two elephants, and three hundred armed chariots, which marched, under the conduct of the young king and his uncle Lysias, to the borders of Idumea, and laid siege to the fortress of Bethsura. Here Judas ventured to attack them by night, and, having killed four thousand of their troops and thrown the whole camp into disorder, returned by day-break without the loss of a single man.

The Syrians now resolved to venture a general engagement, upon the supposition that the Jews, notwithstanding their valour, must infallibly be overpowered by numbers. Judas accordingly advanced towards them at the head of his little army, and gave some convincing proofs of his skill and intrepidity; but, perceiving the extreme danger of his situation, he prudently retreated to Jerusalem; whilst the king renewed his attacks on Bethsura, which was at length obliged to surrender for want of provisions.

Having secured this city with a Syrian garrison, Antiochus marched to Jerusalem, and laid close siege to the temple. Here he met with a

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vigorous resistance, from the valiant general and his troops, who eluded all the machines and attempts of the enemy by counterworks, and applied with the most unremitting diligence to the discharge of their duty. They were however severely distressed for provisions, and were just on the point of surrendering, when Antiochus received intelligence that Philip, who had usurped the government, was marching against him at the head of an army out of Persia. The king, being thus compelled to raise the siege, concluded a peace, and was admitted within the fortifications; but finding them too strong to intrust the Jews with, he commanded them to be demolished in open violation of the treaty which he had just before confirmed with the most solemn oaths.

Menelaus, the apostate high-priest, was at this time accused of certain treasonable practices, and condemned to be smothered with hot ashes—a punishment justly due to the author of so many tragical calamities. The Jews, however, did not gain much by this circumstance, as the pontificate was immediately bestowed on Alcimus, a person no less wicked than his predecessor.

On the death of Antiochus Eupator, and the accession of Demetrius, the rightful heir to the crown of Syria, Alcimus visited B. C. 163. Antioch, for the purpose of complaining to the new monarch respecting the Jews, who, on account of his open impiety, had refused to admit him into the high-priesthood. His accusations against Judas, and the rest of the Asmonean race, were so powerful, and carried on with such seeming zeal for the king, that Bacchides, governor of Mesopotamia, was commissioned to march into Judea, at the head of a considerable army, which

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might reinstate the apostate in his dignity, and carry on the war against the Maccabees.

Upon their arrival, Alcimus and the Syrian general sent deputies to Judas, inviting him to an amicable conference, and protesting with the most solemn vows that he should come and go with perfect safety. The Jewish chief was, however, well aware of their treacherous design, and, instead of accepting the invitation, began to prepare for a vigorous defence—a measure which induced Bacchides to return immediately to Antioch.

Alcimus having received a body of troops from the Syrian for the maintenance of his dignity, and drawn over a considerable number of malcontents to his party by gifts and caresses, determined on effecting his ambitious purposes by violence; and actually made several excursions into different parts of the country, pillaging, burning, and destroying all that refused to acknowledge his ill-gotten authority. These enormities were, however, so severely punished by Judas, that he found it impossible to approach the sacred altar without the assistance of a much greater army, and therefore repaired to the Syrian court with fresh accusations and complaints.

Having presented Demetrius with a rich crown of gold and some other valuables, he obtained the desired assistance of that monarch; and a fresh edict was issued out for the destruction of Judas and his party. But Nicanor, who was intrusted with this commission, had already received such proofs of Judas's bravery, that he prudently resolved to use his utmost endeavours for the restoration of peace. In compliance, however, with the royal command, Nicanor led a numerous

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army into Judea, and Alcimus enjoyed the anticipation of a signal revenge.

Upon the arrival of the Syrians in Judea, their army was considerably augmented by a number of apostate Jews, whom Maccabeus had driven from their habitations; while the true worshippers assembled in the temple to implore the divine assistance by fasting and prayer. Nicanor advanced to the fortress of Dessau; from whence Simon, Judas's brother, retreated precipitately at the sight of his powerful troops, but, instead of commencing any hostilities against the valiant chief, he sent three of his head officers to make proposals of peace. Judas readily acquiesced; and the articles were soon after ratified, to the entire satisfaction of both parties.

The harmony produced by this pacification was soon disturbed, and Palestine was again doomed to groan beneath the miseries of war, through the diabolical arts of the apostate high-priest. This perfidious wretch, conceiving himself injured by the new treaty, went a third time to Demetrius, to accuse Nicanor of concluding a disadvantageous peace with the rebels, whom he was expressly commanded to destroy. The king immediately sent to Nicanor, ordering him to renew the war, and forbidding him to sheath the sword till the Jewish chief should be slain and his party utterly suppressed; in consequence of which, the Syrian general was compelled to violate his promises toward a people who had, on their part, faithfully performed every stipulation of the recent treaty.

Having repeatedly attempted to surprise Judas without success, Nicanor at length ordered his troops to march to Capharsalama, where a battle was fought, greatly to his disadvantage. But the

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Jewish army, finding it impossible to resist such a superior force, retired to their Metropolis. Nicanor followed them thither, and took possession of Mount Sion, from whence he was shown the sacrifices that were offered in the temple for king Demetrius; but this sight was so far from pacifying his resentment, that he called it a base superstition, and swore to destroy both the temple and the worshippers, unless Judas was immediately given up. The priests replied, that Judas had quitted the city; but the exasperated Syrian refused to hearken to their assertions, and instantly commenced his threatened cruelties upon the unhappy race, whose only crime was their fidelity to God and their brave deliverer. Being informed that a member of the sanhedrim, called Razis, had by his precept and example withheld many of his countrymen from renouncing their faith, he sent a detachment to apprehend him, in order that he might either recant his religious opinions, or suffer death. Razis, perceiving his house so effectually surrounded that it was impossible to escape, fell upon his own sword to disappoint the malice of his idolatrous enemy; the wound proving ineffectual, he precipitated himself from one of the turrets of his house; and then, starting up, ran to the summit of an adjacent rock, tore out his bowels, and expired.

During this horrid transaction, Nicanor commenced his march towards the land of Samaria, in order to attack Judas, who had retired thither with three thousand men. The Jewish chief, however, inspired his followers with such extraordinary courage, by quoting some appropriate passages out of the sacred books, and by relating the particulars of a celestial vision, that they fell

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upon the Syrians with irresistible fury, and, having killed the general, pursued their advantage with such unremitting zeal, that not a single man was left to carry the news of the slaughter to Antioch.

Such a series of brilliant successes effectually terrified the enemies of Maccabeus, who now suffered him to return and take possession of Jerusalem. During the peaceful interval which succeeded his last victory, he resolved to procure an alliance with the Romans, which might prove a strong protection against the injustice and oppression of the Syrians. His proposals were readily accepted by the senate, and a decree was engraven on copper, importing that the Jews were acknowledged as friends and allies of the Romans, and that both nations should cheerfully aid and succour each other upon all occasions. But, whilst this alliance was forming at Rome, Demetrius, having heard of Nicanor's defeat, sent the flower of his army, consisting of twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse, into Judea, under the command of Bacchides and Alcimus.

On their arrival in Galilee, they took the city of Maseloth, and massacred a great number of Jews; they then advanced towards Jerusalem; but hearing that Judas had retired with three thousand men to the neighbourhood of Eleasa, they hastened thither in order to attack him immediately. The approach of so formidable an enemy struck an unusual damp into the hearts of Judas's men, who forgetful of their recent victories and unmindful of their champion's preservation, basely forsook the field at this important crisis. The Maccabitish general was much afflicted at this cowardly and ungrateful defection; yet he encou-

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raged the eight hundred men who remained, to behave gallantly, and rely on that superior power which had so frequently torn the laurels from the brows of an idolatrous people and transferred them to the Israel of God. In the ensuing engagement, Judas made a resolute attack on the strongest wing of the adverse army, and pursued the fugitive troops to Mount Azotus; but, in the mean time, he was completely surrounded; and, after a long and vigorous defence, he fell, covered with wounds, on a heap of his enemies.

The report of this unfortunate accident was highly acceptable to the neighbouring nations, who had so often felt the effects of Judas's avenging sword; while the unhappy Jews regretted the loss of their heroic chief, and shrunk in agony from the contemplation of new misfortunes!

Whilst Bacchides was employed in taking proper measures for the security of his own government, the principal officers who served under him were commissioned to search diligently for all the friends and adherents of the Maccabees, and to put them to death by the most cruel methods that could possibly be invented; so that this persecution seemed to exceed all they had suffered since their return from the Babylonish captivity.

Those few, who under such dismal circumstances, still retained an affection for their country and ancient worship, applied to Jonathan, the brother of Judas, and earnestly entreated him to accept the command of the Jewish forces, and undertake the deliverance of their brethren from the Syrian tyranny. Jonathan complied with their desire; but Bacchides was soon apprised of his design, and compelled him to retire into the deserts of Tekoah.

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Jonathan's first care in this retreat was, to secure the effects of his followers, which he accordingly committed to his brother John, and sent under a convoy to an adjacent city; but his unfortunate relative was attacked on the road by a tribe of plundering Arabs, called Jambrians, who slew him and his men, and retreated with the spoil. To revenge this injury, Jonathan laid an ambush in the vicinage of Medula, killed four hundred persons who were assembled to celebrate a wedding between one of the Jambrian chiefs, and a Canaanitish princess, and carried off a considerable booty.

Bacchides now advanced with his army, fully resolved to attack the Jews on their sabbath, upon the supposition that they would patiently submit to death, rather than transgress their law by resistance. In this, however, he was mistaken, as the Jews, partly through the encouragement of their leader, and partly through despair, made a desperate effort, and killed a considerable number of their assailants; but, finding themselves unable to resist such superior forces, they plunged into the Jordan, which bordered their encampment, and swam to the opposite shore, while Bacchides gave orders for the return of his troops to Jerusalem.

On his arrival at that metropolis, he caused all such places to be fortified and garrisoned, as might keep the Jews in awe, and probably compel the Maccabees to submit; and the children of the principal inhabitants were placed as hostages in the fortress of Acra, to prevent their relatives from going over to Jonathan. The impious Alcimius, about the same time, commanded the wall of the temple, B. C. 160.



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which divided the court of the priests from that of the people, to be demolished; but he had scarcely begun the sacrilegious work, before he was struck with a dead palsy, and expired without being able to adjust his affairs, or to utter a single word. After his death, Bacchides, having totally reduced the country, returned to Antioch.

B. C. 158. At the expiration of two years, during which Jonathan and his party had enjoyed the inestimable blessings of peace, Bacchides was again sent into Judea at the head of a numerous army. On his arrival he sent letters to those of his party, desiring them to seize the Jewish chief, and conduct him to the Syrian camp: but Jonathan having timely notice of this treacherous plot, came suddenly upon the chief conspirators, and put them to death.

After this exploit, he retired to Bethbasi, a strong place in the desert of Jericho, which he and his brother Simon furnished with all requisite provisions for a siege. Bacchides advanced as was expected, and sat down before Bethbasi; while Jonathan transferred his command to Simon, and went out with a small brigade to make excursions. Crossing the country he vanquished Odonarches and the sons of Phasiron, who appear to have constituted a part of the besieging host: he then advanced against another part of the camp, and annoyed the enemy so severely, that Bacchides was compelled to hasten to their assistance. Simon, embracing the favourable moment, made a vigorous sally from the fortress, and discomfitted the Syrians on one side, whilst his brother charged them with irresistible fury on the other. Bacchides, exasperated at this unforeseen occurrence, vented his rage upon the

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persons who had first proposed the expedition, and caused many of them to be put to death; till, at length, Jonathan terminated his vexation by sending some acceptable overtures of peace.

By the articles of this treaty, all prisoners were liberated on both sides; Bacchides solemnly engaged to refrain from future hostilities against the Maccabees; and Jonathan seems to have been left deputy governor of Judea; for, as soon as the Syrian general had departed, he settled in Michmash, and commenced a government nearly similar to that of the ancient Israelitish judges.

While the Jews began to revive from the effects of their recent calamities, under the excellent administration of their pious general, the troubles that occurred in Syria gave them an opportunity of wholly recovering their liberty, and elevating themselves to such a height of importance, that their alliance was eagerly courted by contending sovereigns. Demetrius, who had so repeatedly been convinced of their constancy and heroism, justly dreaded their espousing the cause of his competitor Alexander Balus. He therefore sent a letter to Jonathan, declaring him his friend and ally, empowering him to levy what forces he should think fit, and annexing an order for the liberation of all the hostages who had been hitherto detained in the fortress of Acra. In consequence of this authority, Jonathan found his troops augment exceedingly, while the garrisons, left by Bacchides in various strong fortresses, eluded his resentment by a precipitate flight. B. C. 153.

Alexander being apprised of these particulars, resolved to draw Jonathan to his interest, by out-

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bidding the favours of Demetrius; and, accordingly, sent him a most obliging letter, containing the grant of the high-priesthood and accompanied with some magnificent presents.

The Jewish chief being thus invested with the pontifical dignity, immediately levied forces, and caused a great number of military weapons to be made on behalf of his new patron; whose alliance was indisputably preferable to that of a man who had embraced every opportunity of inflicting distress on the inhabitants of Palestine.

B. C. 150. Alexander ascended the throne of Syria with the warmest sentiments of gratitude towards the Maccabitish general, and invited him to the celebration of the royal nuptials at Ptolemais, where he was received with every mark of friendship and esteem. During his stay at this place, some renegado Jews attempted to prejudice Jonathan's concerns, by exhibiting certain malicious accusations against him; but the new monarch espoused the cause of his friend with a truly royal benevolence, and conferred such accumulated honours upon him, that the accusers deemed it advisable to provide for their own safety by an immediate retreat; and the object of their envy returned to Judea in the double capacity of pontiff and generalissimo. About this time the Jewish nation began to rise rapidly in the esteem of foreigners; and Ptolemy Philometer intrusted many of them with the most important offices in his kingdom.

B. C. 148. A revolt of the Syrians, in favour of young Demetrius, induced Apollonius, governor of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, to assemble a powerful army against Jonathan. He accordingly marched towards him as far as

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Jamnia; but, fearing to lose the benefit of his cavalry by penetrating into the mountainous part of Judea, sent him a daring message to come and engage in the plain country. Jonathan accepted the challenge without hesitation, and marched at the head of ten thousand men to Joppa, which he immediately reduced. Apollonius advanced against him with eight thousand foot and three thousand horse, leaving one thousand to surprise the Jews in the rear, while he attacked them in front. This stratagem was, however, admirably frustrated, and the troops of Apollonius were completely routed, with the loss of eight thousand men. Azotus, and some of the neighbouring towns, were pillaged of immense treasures, and Jonathan returned, with his well-earned laurels, to Jerusalem.

In return for his gallant exertions on this occasion, Alexander sent him a rich present, with the grant of the territory of Ekrom; and Philometer, on his arrival at Joppa, honoured him with a most gracious reception, to the mortification of his enemies, who strove to incense that monarch against him.

The kingdom of Syria being transferred to young Demetrius, surnamed Nicanes, and Ptolemy having fallen in battle, Jonathan determined to besiege the fortress of Acra, which was still occupied by Syrian troops, to the great annoyance of those who frequented the temple. He was, at this time, well supplied with forces and engines for his purpose; but in the height of the siege, he was compelled to leave it, and appear before the king at Ptolemais. This ill-timed accident was, however, incapable of shaking his resolution, and he accordingly left orders at Jerusalem



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for the strenuous prosecution of the undertaking, whilst he pleaded his cause at court with such persuasive eloquence, and supported it with such magnificent presents, that Demetrius, having dismissed his accusers with disgrace, confirmed him in the pontificate, enrolled him among the number of his most esteemed friends; and, for the annual tribute of three hundred talents, released Judea, with the three toparchies of Lydda, Apharima, and Ramathea, from all future taxation. Jonathan then returned to Jerusalem, and redoubled his attacks against the fortress; but finding it likely to hold out a considerable time, he procured an order for its evacuation, together with that of several other places, which had been hitherto garrisoned by Syrians.

B. C. 144. Antiochus, the son of Alexander, coming forward to claim the Syrian crown, earnestly requested Jonathan to espouse his cause; and that general, in consequence of Demetrius's violation of his sacred promises, resolved to accept the proposal. For his compliance, he was indulged with a confirmation of all beneficial grants; and his brother Simon was made governor of the sea-coasts, from the Ladder of Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt, and general of all the forces.

Having defeated the Demetrian troops that were sent to make a diversion in Galilee, freed the Jews from the continual insults of the garrison at Bethsura, and taken all the towns from Gazga to Damascus, Jonathan returned to Jerusalem, whence he sent an embassy to renew the alliance between his nation and the Roman senate. He also ordered his ambassadors to act the same part, in their return, with the

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Lacedæmonians and other Grecian states with whom they were in friendship; that the peace and felicity of the Jews might be established on a more permanent foundation than the gratitude of a prince whom they had obliged by the most signal services.

While these alliances were forming, news arrived at Jerusalem of the approach of a powerful body of forces, under the command of the Demetrian generals, who had been recently expelled from Galilee. Jonathan immediately hastened to oppose their progress, and encamped over against them at Amathis on the frontiers of Syria. The enemy, alarmed at his sudden appearance, and finding that he had penetrated all their designs, lighted a number of fires to conceal their flight, and forsook their camp with the utmost celerity. The Jewish chief, in order to remunerate his troops for their fatiguing march, fell upon a body of Demetrian Arabs, and, returning through Damascus, arrived at Jerusalem with a considerable spoil.

Simon, who had, in the mean time, been left in care of Judea and Galilee, reviewed the garrisons of Ascalon and other fortresses, secured the city of Joppa with a strong guard, and took such other measures as were requisite for the preservation of the new acquisitions. He then followed his brother to Jerusalem, and called a council, wherein it was agreed, that all the forts of Judea should be thoroughly repaired, that the wall of the metropolis should be rebuilt, and that a new wall should be raised between Mount Sion and the rest of the city, to cut off all communication with the fortress of Acra.

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B. C. 144. Jonathan had governed the Jewish state with equal prudence and success nearly seventeen years, when the perfidious Tryphon prevailed on him to disband his numerous army, and soon after decoyed him into the city of Ptolemais, where he was inhumanly murdered, notwithstanding a considerable sum had been sent from Judea under the name of a ransom. The news of his assassination, and the slaughter of one thousand persons who attended him, was no sooner published in Jerusalem, than the whole city was thrown into the utmost consternation, every one expecting the arrival of the murderer, together with all the heathens and apostates who had been chastised with exemplary severity by the late general. And, indeed, those fears were but too well grounded, as Tryphon was actually preparing to invade Judea with a force that might extirpate the whole nation.

In this emergency the Jews promoted Simon, the only surviving son of Mattathias, to the high-priesthood, and prevailed on him to accept the command of their troops. He accordingly exerted himself to complete the fortifications of the city, and to assemble a respectable army before the arrival of Tryphon should deprive him of the means. But that cowardly traitor, on the report of these spirited measures, thought proper to temporise, and hastened back to Syria. As soon as he had retired, Simon caused the murdered bodies of Antiochus and Jonathan, with his two sons, to be brought to Modin, and buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

Ambassadors being sent, to notify the treacherous murder of Jonathan, to Rome and La-

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cedæmon, both nations expressed the utmost resentment against Tryphon's cruelty, and cheerfully renewed their friendship with Simon; to whom they sent a ratification of their alliance engraved on copper, together with congratulatory letters on his accession to the pontifical dignity. Having thus strengthened himself by alliances, and fortified the country against invasion, he sent an embassy to Demetrius, whom Tryphon had stripped of the greatest part of his kingdom, offering to acknowledge his sovereignty, and assist him in dispossessing the usurper, on condition that he would confirm him in his dignities, and his nation in all their privileges and immunities. These proposals, accompanied with a rich crown of gold, and some other costly presents, were so acceptable to Demetrius, that he immediately sent a letter under the royal signature, by which he granted all the demands, constituted Simon a sovereign prince of the Jewish nation, and released the land entirely from foreign dominion. From this time Simon assumed the name of prince and high-priest of the Jews; which dignities having been confirmed to him and his descendants by the Sanhedrim, all public acts were ordered to be made in his name.

Simon's chief concern now was, to strengthen himself in his new dignity; for which purpose he repaired and fortified all his garrisons afresh; sent Jonathan, the son of Absalom, to besiege Joppa; and advanced himself against the city of Gaza, which he purified of all its idolatrous monuments, and garrisoned with a body of Jewish troops.

In the course of the next year, the fortress of Acra was surrendered, after it had been held by

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the Syrians for the term of twenty-five years. The garrison were permitted to march out peaceably, whilst Simon and his attendants entered with branches of palm, songs of thanksgiving, and other demonstrations of joy. It was at first designed to be lustrated for the residence of some Jewish soldiers; but, on mature deliberation, it was deemed most advisable to demolish it, together with the hill on which it stood, that it might be no more in a condition to annoy the temple of God.

B. C. 140. Antiochus being invited by his sister-in-law, Cleopatra, to make an attempt on the throne of Syria, sent a very obliging letter to the Jewish pontiff, in which he confirmed all his dignities, revenues, and authority; and added, besides many other privileges, the power of coining their own money, which Simon immediately made use of. The prince, however, had no sooner established himself in the regal dignity, before a fresh embassy was sent to renew and strengthen the alliance of the Jews with Rome.

Soon after this period, Antiochus insisted upon Simon's surrendering Joppa, Gazara, and the citadel of Jerusalem, or else paying five hundred talents for each, and five hundred more for the ravages which the Jews had committed in his dominions. Atheriobius was sent to Jerusalem upon that business; but Simon boldly replied, he was in possession of nothing but the inheritance of his ancestors, except the fortresses of Joppa and Gazara, which he had been compelled to seize, in order to suppress the continual devastations they made in Judea, that he was willing to pay the king a hundred talents for those; but

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that he could by no means consent to make any restitution for the fortress of Acra. Atheriobius returned with this answer to the king, and Cendebeus, one of the nobles, was immediately commissioned to invade Judea.

Cendebeus having received the government of Phœnicia and Palestine, marched at the head of a numerous army towards Jamnia and Joppa, whence he made many inroads into Judea, took a great number of prisoners, and laid waste all that part of the country.

On the report of this invasion, Simon being too far advanced in years to head the troops, called his two sons, John and Judas, into his presence, and committed his important charge to them, solemnly conjuring them to imitate the illustrious examples of their deceased uncles, and to venture their lives boldly in behalf of their religion and country.

The young commanders immediately set out at the head of twenty thousand foot soldiers, besides some cavalry, and on the morrow came up with the enemy. The engagement was furious, and, for some time, well disputed on both sides; but at length the Syrians were struck with an extraordinary fright at the sound of the sacred trumpets, and retreated in the utmost confusion. Cendebeus himself was pursued to the gates of Cedron; a prodigious number were slain in their flight, and two thousand perished in the forts that were burnt in the plains of Azotus. Having obtained this signal victory, the valiant brothers returned to Jerusalem without any considerable loss. B. C. 139.

About three years after this exploit, Ptolemy, the son-in-law to the high-priest, invited Simon,

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with his two sons, Judas and Matthias to a sumptuous entertainment at his castle, and caused them to be there assassinated by hired ruffians. The perfidious monster had, at the same time, sent an invitation to John, surnamed Hyrcanus, but he happily escaped the snare, and caused the messengers of Ptolemy to be put to death.

Hyrcan deeming it imprudent to continue at Gazara after the assassination of his father and brethren, advanced with all possible haste towards Jerusalem, where the murderer arrived as soon as he, and demanded admittance at the same time. The citizens readily admitted Hyrcan, and invested him with his father's dignities; but the wretch who, under the specious mask of hospitality, had decoyed an affectionate and pious relative to an ignoble death, and basely murdered two promising youths from motives of the blackest nature, was repulsed with laudable indignation.

Antiochus, upon the news of Simon's death, resolved to revenge the late defeat of Cendebeus. He accordingly entered Judea the same year with a powerful army, and driving Hyrcan before him, laid close siege to Jerusalem. The garrison were soon reduced to extremities, and the most dreadful ideas entertained of the king's intentions; but when they solicited a truce of seven days, for the purpose of celebrating the feast of tabernacles, Antiochus sent them a considerable number of victims, with several vessels of gold and silver filled with precious perfumes, and soon after consented to grant them a peace, on condition that their arms should be delivered up, their city wall demolished, and a certain tribute paid for the towns which they held out of Judea.

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Hyrcan finding, on the death of Antiochus, that the kingdom of Syria was rent with intestine commotions, marched thither with a considerable army, in order to seize upon some of the defenceless cities. He accordingly reduced Madeba, Samega, and several others, both in Arabia and Phœnicia; and may be said to have effected a complete deliverance for his nation from the oppression of Syria; for neither he nor any of his successors paid homage to the kings of Syria from this time, but lived free and independent. B. C. 130.

He now turned his victorious arms against the Samaritans, from whom he took Sechem and Garizzim, and demolished the temple formerly built by Sanballat, with all the idolatrous altars and monuments that had been erected in the time of Jezebel. The following year he conquered Idumea and issued out a proclamation, commanding all persons to adopt the rite of circumcision, or quit the country; in consequence of which, the Idumeans consented to forsake their idolatrous practices, and were incorporated into the Jewish commonwealth.

Having thus augmented his conquests, and renewed his alliance with the Romans, Hyrcan saw himself well established in his dominions, while the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria were convulsed with a succession of wars and revolutions. Alexander Zebina courted his friendship on his accession to the Syrian throne, but this prince being soon killed, Antiochus Gryphus prepared to invade Judea in resentment of Hyrcan's attachment to his rival; but his design was suddenly frustrated by the hostile approach of his brother.



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Hyrcan now enjoyed his sovereign authority without any disturbance, and continued to amass immense treasures by the tributes he received from his own flourishing country, and those recently subjected to his dominion. At length, some hostilities committed by the Samaritans against the city of Maressa, gave him an opportunity of renewing the war against that people. Having advanced with his two sons, Antigonus and Aristobulus, at the head of a numerous army to Samaria, he encompassed the city with a wall, and a deep ditch of four thousand paces circuit, by which the inhabitants were reduced to such extremities, that they were compelled to eat cats, dogs, and all other unclean animals. In this miserable situation, however, they found means to send for succour to Antiochus Cyrzicenus, then king of Syria, who hastened with a considerable body of forces to their assistance. Hyrcan's presence was now indispensably necessary at Jerusalem, the grand day of expiation being at hand; but Aristobulus marched against the Syrians, and defeated them with great slaughter. The siege was then renewed with unabated vigour, and the city was at length razed to the ground by Hyrcan, who, from this time, became more and more powerful, and annexed the provinces of Galilee and Samaria to his former territories in Palestine.

Having thus raised the Jewish religion and commonwealth to so enviable a height, and exercised with equal prudence the functions of a sovereign prince and pontiff, Hyrcan died in the twenty-ninth year of his high-priesthood, and left five sons, Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander, Absalom, and one whose name does not

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occur. The reign of this illustrious Asmonean was no less remarkable for the happy effects of his government at home, than for his heroic firmness in the field of battle, and the surprising extent of his conquests. In his life he was beloved by his people, esteemed by his allies, and dreaded by his enemies; and his death was regretted by all the Jews, except the Pharisee faction, who embittered his last days, and endeavoured to blacken his memory by the vilest calumnies.

Aristobulus immediately succeeded to his father's dignities; and, for some time, B. C. 107. permitted Antigonus to share the government with him, but afterwards caused him to be killed upon suspicion of disloyalty. His mother having claimed a right to the sovereignty, by virtue of Hyrcan's will, was barbarously starved to death; and her other sons were kept in close confinement: while this tyrannical persecutor assumed the royal diadem, which had not been worn by any of his predecessors, and effected the conquest of Iturea. His successes were, however, soon impeded by sickness; and the deep remorse he felt for the crime of parricide, produced a vomiting of blood, which put a speedy period to his life and infamous reign.

Alexander being set at liberty by the queen, assumed the reins of government; and took Absalom, the youngest brother, under his protection. In the first year of his reign, he led an army against the city of Ptolemais, expecting to reap some advantages from the civil wars of Syria; but whilst he was engaged in the siege of that place, Ptolemy Lathyrus invaded his dominions, dispossessed him of Azochis in Galilee, took ten thousand of his subjects captive, and defeated his

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troops with great slaughter near the banks of the Jordan. These exploits would, in all probability, have been soon succeeded by the conquest of Judea, had not Cleopatra, by her unexpected arrival, compelled Lathyrus to retire.

B. C. 100. The Jewish prince, having acknowledged Cleopatra's timely assistance by some magnificent presents, and ingratiated himself with her by his polite behaviour, returned to Jerusalem, where he recruited his broken army, and made such arrangements as might enable him to retrieve his late disgrace by some important acquisitions. Crossing the Jordan, he laid siege to Gadara, which he reduced at the end of ten months; whence he proceeded to Amathus, another strong fortress, where Theodotus, the son of Zeno, tyrant of Philadelphia, had deposited an immense treasure. This he also took with tolerable facility; but Theodotus, having assembled a powerful army, fell upon him as he was returning from the siege, killed ten thousand of his men, put the rest to a precipitate flight, and carried off, together with his own wealth, a very considerable booty.

B. C. 98. This defeat occasioned the Pharisees, his implacable enemies, to vilify his government; but Alexander was by no means discouraged from pursuing his warlike designs. He therefore hastened to revenge himself on the Gazaeans; who, by furnishing Lathyrus with auxiliaries, had caused his late overthrow. He immediately invested the towns of Raphia and Anthedon; and, next year, advanced against Gaza, which made a vigorous defence, but was at length reduced by treachery. Having obtained admission, he promised to treat the inhabitants

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with clemency, but soon abandoned them to the fury of his troops, and reduced their city to a heap of ruins.

On his return from this expedition, he was treated in the most contemptuous manner by the citizens of Jerusalem; who, having been exasperated by the Pharisees, actually pelted him as he was officiating at the great altar on the feast of tabernacles; and insulted him with the most opprobrious language. The interference of the soldiery, however, dispersed the riotous assembly; and Alexander immediately took the most prudent precautions for his future safety. B. C. 95.

Soon after this occurrence he marched from Jerusalem, at the head of a numerous army, and destroyed the city of Amathus. He then subdued the Arabians; and laid the Moabites and the Gileaditish mountaineers under tribute; but, in consequence of a defeat, which he sustained near Gadaca, he was compelled to return to his metropolis, where the artifices of the Pharisees had, by this time, blown the embers of discontent into an open flame of rebellion. Alexander quickly assembled a body of forces to espouse his cause, and a civil war ensued, which continued for the space of six years, and swept fifty thousand of the rebels to an untimely grave, besides involving the nation in innumerable calamities.

Demetrius immediately resolved to avail himself of these fierce contentions, and invaded Judea with an army of three thousand horse and forty thousand foot, partly Jews and partly Syrians; and Alexander marched against him with twenty thousand Jews and six thousand Greek auxiliaries: but the latter was B. C. 89.



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defeated, and obliged to fly to the mountains for shelter. He was, however, suddenly relieved by a defection of the adverse Jews; and Demetrius left the country in order to oppose the progress of his brother Philip.

Alexander eagerly embraced this opportunity of marching against his rebellious subjects, whom he defeated in several engagements, but without bringing them to submission, till he at length cut off the greater part of their forces in one decisive battle, and drove the rest into Bethome, where he closely besieged them; and next year, having made himself master of the place, chastised their disobedience with unparalleled severity.

Having thus effectually crushed the rebellion, Alexander crossed the Jordan, to recover some places in Arabia, Moabites, and Gilead; which he had been recently forced to surrender. This invasion brought Aretas, king of Arabia and Cœlo-Syria, into Judea, where he obtained some advantages; but soon withdrew his troops, and left the Asmonean to pursue his design: who accordingly demolished the city of Pella; pillaged Essa of an immense treasure; made himself master of Gualana, Seleucia, and Gamala; and carried Demetrius, who commanded in those places, prisoner to Jerusalem.

The success of this expedition gained the loud applause of the populace; and Alexander was now become an object of terror to the surrounding nations; but his unremitting debaucheries threw him into an obstinate quartan ague, and hastened his death. Neither his pleasures nor distemper could, however, repress his ardour for conquest; for he persisted in seeking glory in the field of battle, till his strength was entirely

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exhausted; and he died in his camp, before the fortress of Regaba.

He left two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus; but bequeathed the government of the state to his wife Alexandra, during her life; and then to either of the princes as she might think fit. The queen foreseeing the extreme danger to which herself and family would, in all probability, be exposed by the malice of the Pharisees, consulted her dying consort on that important subject; and received such advice as had the desired effect upon the objects of her apprehension.

Hyrcanus, the eldest son, was deemed a fit successor to his father in the pontificate, because he was less likely to interfere with the regal authority than his younger brother, who was of a more enterprising genius. B. C. 78. But though the queen took effectual measures for the prevention of any disturbance in her own family, she was equally alarmed and vexed by the untractable Pharisees, who soon began to grow insolent upon her humble submissions, and compelled her to grant the most exorbitant demands, to the derogation of her prerogative, and the manifest injury of her subjects.

Upon intelligence that Tigranes, king of Armenia, had entered Syria with an army of fifty thousand men, and that he designed to march from thence into Palestine; the whole kingdom was thrown into consternation, not being able to oppose so powerful an invader. The queen therefore sent an embassy, accompanied with many valuable presents, to avert the impending storm; and had, soon after, the satisfaction to find that Tigranes was forced to re- B. C. 70.

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tire to his own country, which was threatened by the Romans.

About this time Alexandra was seized with a dangerous fit of sickness, which induced her youngest son to make an effort for the succession. He accordingly left Jerusalem with the utmost privacy, and contrived to gain over the governors of several important fortresses to his party.

The news of this proceeding no sooner reached the Pharisees, than they hastened with Hyrcan to the queen, and conjured her to take some resolution in the desperate posture of their affairs. Alexandra was then in the agonies of death, and had but just strength enough to tell them, she left it wholly to them to provide for their own safety; appointed Hyrcan her successor; and was well assured they had a sufficient force to frustrate the ambitious designs of Aristobulus. The exertion which attended these words was too strong for her debilitated frame, and she expired immediately after, in the seventy-third year of her age, and the ninth of her reign.

Aristobulus immediately assumed the royal title and state, while the Pharisees seized on his wife and children and confined them in the castle of Baris. A battle was soon after fought at Jericho, in which most of Hyrcan's forces revolted to his brother, so that he was compelled to retire to Jerusalem, where he obtained a peace from Aristobulus, on condition of resigning his dignities, and contenting himself with his peculiar patrimony in a private life.

Antipater, an Idumean proselyte, who had been raised to the government of his native country by Alexander Jannæus, began to despair of

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further advancement in consequence of this disposition, and had some reason to dread the resentment of the reigning prince. He therefore joined the discontented Pharisees, and offered to procure the assistance of Aretas, king of Arabia, for the accomplishment of their designs. Having obtained a commission for that purpose, he visited the Arabian court, and performed his task with such diligence, that he soon came back for the prince, and conveyed him with surprising secrecy to Petra, where he presented him to the king; and used so many persuasive arguments in his behalf, that Aretas promised to invade Judea, and accordingly marched thither with an army of five thousand men. Aristobulus hearing of his arrival, and finding that he was joined by all the malcontents, advanced to oppose his progress; but, after an obstinate engagement, he was defeated with great loss, and forced to fly to the metropolis. The victorious Arabian, pursuing his advantage, proceeded likewise to Jerusalem, and compelled Aristobulus, with his few remaining forces, to take shelter in the precinct of the temple.

In this emergency Aristobulus resolved to apply for succour to the Romans. He accordingly sent ambassadors to Scaurus, who was then on the road from Syria, imploring his friendship, and offering a considerable sum for his assistance. Scaurus immediately wrote to Aretas, commanding him to withdraw his troops from Judea, under the penalty of being declared an enemy to Rome; and the Arabian readily obeyed. Aristobulus being thus relieved, assembled an army with all possible dispatch, and pursued his invader, whom he now defeated with the loss of seven thousand men. B. C. 65.

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About the same time Pompey arrived at Damascus, and received ambassadors from all the neighbouring states, particularly those of Judea, Syria, and Egypt. The princes of these holding their dignities by a precarious title, were exceedingly desirous to gain the Romans to their interest; and with that view sent a profusion of rich presents to their general. On his arrival in Cœlo-Syria, Hyrcan and Aristobulus each sent a second embassy to implore his patronage against the other. Pompey heard both deputies with seeming equanimity, dismissed them with fair promises, and ordered the contending brothers to appear in person and plead their cause before him.

Early in the following spring Pompey returned to Syria, where he took several fortresses, deposed several petty tyrants, and came at length to Damascus. Here he found the Jewish princes waiting to plead their cause, and provided with a number of witnesses to substantiate their respective complaints. On the day appointed for their audience, a body of Jews came forward to accuse them of acting contrary to the ancient laws, and of reducing the Jewish nation to a state of slavery, by introducing a monarchical government, after the high-priests of God had long discharged the duties of government, without assuming the regal dignity. Hyrcan then complained of the injustice of his younger brother, in deposing him from that authority, which was his hereditary right, and forcing him into private life, while the revenues of his kingdom were seized by the usurper, and his neighbours continually plundered both by sea and land. Aristobulus readily answered, that he had, indeed, wrested the government from his brother; not from any ambitious

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view of his own, but for the benefit of the nation, who contemned the authority of a person so sluggish and inactive as Hyrcan; and with respect to the royal title, he observed, he was guilty of no innovation, as his father Alexander had borne it before him. Pompey having heard and duly considered the pretensions of each party, resolved to declare in favour of Hyrcan; but prudently concealed his intention, lest Aristobulus should obstruct his expedition against the Nabatheans; and dismissed them with an assurance that he would visit Judea, as soon as he had vanquished Aretis, and there determine the controversy.

This declaration was so unsatisfactory to the younger brother, that he departed in disgust, first to Dalion and then to Judea, without taking leave of the Roman general. Pompey, incensed at this disrespectful behaviour, marched directly in pursuit of him at the head of his troops; and hearing that he was at the castle of Alexandria, summoned him to appear and account for his rashness. Aristobulus was with much difficulty prevailed on, to prevent a war with Rome, to obey the summons. At length, however, he went, and exerted himself to the utmost, in compliments, presents, and promises, to obtain the aid of Pompey's protection; but, instead of effecting his purpose, he had the mortification to find he must deliver all his fortresses into the Roman's hands. He then perceived the true extent of his misfortune, and deeply regretted his having appealed to so partial an arbitrator; but, being now in the power of his adversary, he was necessitated to submit.

Aristobulus no sooner found himself at liberty

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after this unexpected humiliation, than he hastened to Jerusalem, fully resolved to frustrate the effects of Pompey's decision; but, on the immediate pursuit of that general, he repented of his imprudence, and humbly prostrating himself at his feet, promised to give him a considerable sum of money if he would forbear any hostilities against the nation. The general agreed to his proposal, and detained him in the camp, whilst Gabinius was sent to demand the stipulated sum; but, on the garrison refusing to fulfil the agreement, Aristobulus was loaded with chains, and the army ordered to march directly against the city.

The faction of Hyrcan being the more numerous, readily opened the gates, whilst that of Aristobulus took shelter in the temple. Pompey sent one of his generals to secure the place and the royal palace, while those who occupied the temple were busily employed in fortifying every part of it for sustaining a siege. Battering rams and other engines of war being brought from Tyre, a powerful attack was made on the north side of the edifice, which was the weakest, though enclosed with strong walls, high towers, and a deep ditch. The besieged were, however, so industrious in levelling and dismounting the works of their enemy, that they might in all probability have held out a considerable time, had they not, at the end of three months, adopted their old tenet of non-resistance on the sabbath.

The besiegers having at length observed, that no opposition was made to their attempts on that day, took the advantage of getting all things ready for an assault; and on the ensuing sabbath mastered the place, by battering down one of the towers, together with a part of the wall.

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A horrid slaughter immediately ensued, in which twelve thousand persons perished by the arms of the Romans, besides many others who died by their own hands. The priests, however, contrived to offer up their usual sacrifices and devotions with the same calmness as if they had been in perfect safety, and suffered themselves to be massacred before the altar with as much meekness as the victims they were then offering. Pompey was much surprised at this religious heroism, but caused all the prisoners to be put to death who had been most zealous against him; whilst great numbers eluded the fury of his troops, by throwing themselves down precipices, or enveloping themselves and their apartments in flames.

The face of the Jewish affairs was now entirely changed. Hyrcan, though restored to the pontificate with the specious title of prince, was deprived of the royal diadem, and made tributary to Rome; all the cities which his valiant predecessors had taken in Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia, were restored to Syria; and he was strictly forbidden to extend his territory beyond the ancient borders of Judea. Pompey having thus subdued the Jewish nation, and gratified his curiosity by penetrating into the most sacred recesses of the temple, pulled down the walls of Jerusalem, and left Scaurus governor, with a sufficient body of troops to prevent a future revolt. He then set out for Rome, taking with him Aristobulus and his four children, as captives to adorn his triumph.



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## SECT. IV.

*The History of the Jews, from their being subdued by the Romans to the Reign of Herod the Great.*

HYRCAN had no sooner obtained a deliverance from his rival brother, than he relapsed into his former indolence, and left the care of his affairs to Antipater, who failed not to turn it to the advantage and aggrandizement of his own family.

B. C. 57. Alexander, son of Aristobulus, contrived, in the mean time, to escape from Rome, and to return into Judea; where he soon raised a powerful party, and an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. He also began to fortify several eminent fortresses near the foot of the Arabian mountains, and augmented the number of his followers so rapidly, that Hyrcan, being in no condition to oppose him, was compelled to call in the Romans, in order to suppress this new invader. A body of troops being immediately sent from Syria, Alexander was obliged to retire into the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where he was defeated with the loss of three thousand men. From thence he removed to Alexandrion, and was closely besieged by Gabinius, till at length he was dismissed with pardon and impunity, through the exquisite prudence of his mother, who had insinuated herself into the Roman general's favour. Gabinius ordered the fortress to be destroyed, with those of Machaeron and Hyrcanson, that they might no longer be an occasion of fresh revolts; and conducted Hyrcan

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to Jerusalem, for the express purpose of reinstating him in his pontifical dignity. He then divided the province into five districts, and established a separate court of judicature in each, by which means the government was transformed into an aristocracy; and the Jews, who had been hitherto governed by their own monarchical pontiffs, fell under the subjection of a race of tyrants.

Soon after this event, Aristobulus found means to escape from prison, and to enter Judea with his son Antigonus. Here he was joined by a considerable number of Jews, who offered to assist him in rebuilding the castle of Alexandrion. A detachment of Romans, however, cut off the greatest part of his adherents, and drove the rest into the ruinated fortress of Machaeron; whence Aristobulus and his son were sent, covered with wounds, to the same prison in which they had been confined after Pompey's triumph.

Gabinius being invited next year into Egypt to assist Ptolemy Auletes in the recovery of his crown, Alexander seized that opportunity of entering Judea, at the head of a considerable army, and taking an ample revenge on the Romans wherever he found them. His successes were however of short duration, as Gabinius hastened towards him on the first account of his invasion, and defeated him in the vicinage of Mount Tabor with the loss of ten thousand men.

Crassus, succeeding Gabinius, in the government of Syria, found the whole province in peace, a circumstance which gave him leisure to pursue his favourite design of invading the Parthians. But previously to his departure on that expedition, he plundered the temple at Jerusalem of every thing that was va- B. C. 54.

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luable, not excepting the most sacred utensils. The whole amount of this sacrilegious pillage is said to have been upwards of two millions sterling.

B. C. 52. On the death of this monster of impiety, Cassius led the poor remains of his army to suppress the incursions which the victorious Parthians now made in that province. From thence he marched into Judea, where he besieged the city of Taricha on the south shore of the lake Gennezareth, whither Pitolaus had retreated with the surviving remnant of Alexander's faction. The place being reduced, Pitolaus was put to death by the counsel of Antipater, and thirty thousand individuals were taken prisoners.

B. C. 49. About three years after the reduction of Tarichæa, Julius Cæsar became master of Rome, when thinking that Aristobulus might render him some service against Pompey, he set him at liberty, and sent him into Palestine at the head of two legions, to overawe the Syrians; but some of Pompey's partisans contrived to poison him, and by that means frustrated Cæsar's politic design. The news of his return into Judea induced his son, Alexander, to raise some forces to join him on his arrival; but Metellus Scipio, son-in-law to Pompey, caused the unfortunate prince to be seized and brought before his tribunal at Antioch, where he was immediately doomed to suffer decapitation.

In the mean time, the war between Cæsar and Pompey afforded the Jews an opportunity of ingratiating themselves with the former, who was then waiting impatiently in Egypt for new levies under Mithridates the Pergamenian. These being

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unable to break through Pelusium, he was obliged to stop at Ascalon for new reinforcements; till the arrival of Antipater at the head of three thousand Jews, with some other succours, drawn from Armenia, Mount Libanus, and Syria, enabled him to carry the city of Pelusium by assault. In return for this well-timed assistance, and the gallantry of the Jewish commander, Cæsar confirmed Hyrcan in the pontificate, entailed the principality of Judea on his posterity for ever, and ordered a pillar to be erected, whereon various beneficial grants were confirmed to the Jewish nation. He also conceived a particular esteem for Antipater, and gave him some unequivocal marks of friendship, by presenting him with the freedom of Rome, making him procurator of Judea, and advancing him to a distinguished post in the army.

Antigonus, hearing of these particulars, hastened to the dictator, and presented an accusation against the new favourites, representing the misfortunes his family had suffered, and petitioning for the restoration of his father's principality. Antipater, however, defended his own cause and that of Hyrcan with such forcible eloquence, that the accuser was repulsed, as a factious and turbulent person; and the late decree in favour of his enemies was engraved on brazen tables, to be hung up in the temples of Ascalon, Tyre, and Sidon, as well as in the capitol at Rome, whither Hyrcan soon afterwards sent ambassadors to renew his alliance with that nation, and to obtain a promissory decree for rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

Antipater on his return from Tyre, whither he had accompanied his patron, exerted himself to restore the Jewish state to its ancient model, and



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to repair the fortifications of Jerusalem. He bestowed the government of that metropolis on his eldest son Phasael, and made Herod his second son governor of Galilee. The former neglected nothing that could render him popular in his new office; and the latter soon signalized himself by the extirpation of a dangerous banditti, that had long infested the country; so that Antipater had the satisfaction of seeing his sons become the darlings of the nation, without *apparently* lessening any part of their respect to Hyrcan, who still seemed to be at the head of all national concerns.

This rapid augmentation of power in Antipater's family was, however, by no means pleasing to the generality of the people, who regarded Herod's conduct, with respect to the banditti, as highly culpable in itself, and prelusive of future tyranny. They accordingly prevailed on their high-priest to summon Herod before him and the sanhedrim; but the appearance of that young hero on the day of audience, gave them to understand that he came not as a *private person*, much less as a *culprit*, in expectation of an unfavourable sentence. He was clothed in purple, attended by a numerous retinue, and provided with letters from Sextus Cæsar, which seem to have been calculated to intimidate the sanhedrim, rather than to recommend his cause to the pontiff who was already sufficiently in his interest. These circumstances struck such an awe into the court, that none of his accusers ventured for some time to open their lips; but at length Sameas, a man of known wisdom and integrity, boldly stepped forward, and arraigned him, not only for his former crime, but for his present audacity, in attempting to frighten his judges, instead of ex-

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culpating himself from the charges preferred against him. Hyrcan, perceiving the impression which this speech made on the court, adjourned it till the next day, and advised Herod privately to elude the impending danger by a timely flight. Herod accordingly retired to Damascus, whence he sent a contemptuous message to the sanhedrim, importing that if they were disposed to summon him again, he would disclaim their jurisdiction.

B. C. 44. Two years after this transaction, Hyrcan obtained a fresh decree for fortifying his metropolis; together with such a profusion of immunities and privileges, that the Jewish nation could hardly be said to feel the weight of the Roman yoke. This happy state was not, however, of long duration, as two remarkable accidents soon happened, viz. the murder of Sextus Cæsar in Judea, and the assassination of Julius at Rome, which brought on a series of distractions and calamities.

Cassius, having driven Bassus from Syria, seized upon his government, and assembling an army of twelve legions, began to levy large tributes upon that province, and particularly on Judea, which he taxed at seven hundred talents. Antipater, who knew the consequence of sending an immediate supply, committed the levying of half the stipulated sum to his sons, and ordered the remainder to be raised by one Malichus and his associates. Herod immediately ingratiated himself with the new governor by a prompt compliance with his orders, and Phasael soon followed with his quota; but the other governors not coming forward with equal alacrity, Cassius ordered all the inhabitants of their respective cities to be sold by

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auction; and would have sacrificed Malichus to his resentment, had not the pontiff redeemed him at the expense of a hundred talents.

Malichus, who bore an inveterate hatred to Antipater, soon formed the resolution of taking him off by treachery; but his plot being discovered, he went to him in a seemingly friendly manner, and by oaths, assurances, and protestations, convinced him of his innocence, insomuch that Antipater used all his interest to prevent the governor of Syria from putting him to death. Malichus was, however, of too vile a disposition to be affected by this generosity, and soon afterwards bribed Hyrcan's butler to poison the deluded Idumean, while himself with an armed force seized upon the government of Jerusalem. Phasael and Herod were at no loss to discover the author of this villainy, and resolved to punish him by some private stratagem, without involving the nation in the calamities of a civil war.

An opportunity soon offered for the execution of this design. Cassius having subdued Laodicea, was visited with presents and congratulations by all the chief lords of Syria and Palestine; and Malichus among the rest hastened to pay his respects to the conqueror. Herod fell in with him on the road, and invited him to a banquet in the neighbourhood of Tyre. The invitation was accepted; and the Tyrian officers, in compliance with the orders of Cassius, rewarded the traitor's crimes by rushing into the apartment, and sheathing their daggers in his body. The Jewish pontiff, being apprised of his death, appeared thunderstruck for some time, but on Herod's asserting that he had fallen by Cassius's commands, he replied he must applaud the deed,

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since it had delivered him from a formidable enemy.

The brother of the deceased, under the specious pretence of avenging Malichus, threw Judea into the utmost confusion, whilst Cassius was compelled to march into Asia. Felix, who was left at the head of some Roman forces in Jerusalem, seems also to have been gained to his party; and Hyrcan was too inactive to take any measures against them; so that Felix attacked Phasael on the one hand, while Malchius's brother reduced Massada and some other important fortresses. Phasael, however, found means to chase Felix from Jerusalem, and Herod, who had been detained by sickness at Damascus, hastened to Massada, where he subdued the other faction, and obliged their leader to capitulate for his life. The two brothers then returned to Jerusalem, and boldly upbraided Hyrcan with pusillanimity; but a reconciliation was soon effected, by the marriage of Herod with Mariamne, the beautiful grand-daughter of the high-priest. B. C. 42.

These troubles were scarcely appeased, when Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus, having gained the protection of Ptolemy Mennæus, prince of Chalcis, and of Fabius, governor of Damascus, put himself at the head of a numerous army, to revive his father's pretensions to Judea; but his project was frustrated by Herod, who engaged him on the frontiers, and compelled him to retreat with considerable loss.

Soon after this event, Mark Antony came to settle the affairs of Syria. On his arrival at Bithynia, the Jews preferred some heavy complaints against Phasael and Herod, as having engrossed

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the entire administration of Judea, and left Hyrcan only the empty name of a prince. But Herod had taken such politic precautions to secure the friendship of Antony, that the accusers were dismissed with contempt. The Jewish prisoners, whom Cassius had caused to be sold by auction, were now restored to their liberty and former possessions; and Hyrcan received a letter from the Roman general, replete with expressions of anxiety and respect.

Notwithstanding these public marks of esteem for the sons of Antipater, the triumvir had no sooner reached the city of Daphne, near Antioch, than he was accosted by a second embassy from Jerusalem, on the subject of the former complaints. Messala undertook the defence of the accused commanders, and Hyrcan himself espoused their cause so warmly, that Antony made them both tetrarchs, intrusted them with the care of Judea, and wrote a letter to the sanhedrim in their favour, while fifteen of their most turbulent enemies were imprisoned, and would have been executed had not Herod interceded for their lives.

The opposite faction were only exasperated by these proceedings, and a third embassy, consisting of a thousand persons, was immediately sent to Tyre; but Antony, who was now fully confirmed in Herod's interest, sent orders to the magistracy to assist in the punishment of those factious mutineers. Herod and Hyrcan then attempted to stop their design, by representing the danger which they must incur; but the rash ambassadors pressed forward to prefer their complaints, and were either cut to pieces, or taken prisoners by the Tyrians.

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Next year Judea was again invaded by Antigonus, who had persuaded a great number of discontented Jews to enlist beneath his banner, and had also procured a body of cavalry from Parthia. With these united forces he made himself master of the canton of Dryma, and from thence proceeded to Jerusalem. Here he was so warmly repulsed by the tetrarchs, that he was compelled to take shelter in the temple. The hostile troops continued, however, to skirmish with each other till the feast of pentecost, when Antigonus was joined by many of the Jews who assembled at that solemnity; but as their exertions were soon crushed by the vigilance of Herod, and the greater part of them were destitute of arms, the invaders were disappointed of their expectations; and the two parties, being at length tired of shedding so much blood, came to an agreement, that Pecorus, cup-bearer to the king of Parthia, who had accompanied Antigonus, and was now encamped without the walls of the city, should be admitted to mediate a peace. B. C. 40.

This project, though set on foot by Antigonus, who relied entirely on the friendship of the Parthian general, was nevertheless agreed to by Phasael, who went out to meet him, and accommodated him with an apartment in the royal palace.

Here Pacorus, taking advantage of the confidence his generous host reposed in him, persuaded him to go on an embassy to Barzanes, who was then governor of Syria, under the Parthian king. Herod, suspecting the treachery of the Parthians, was much averse to the proposal; but his remonstrances were disregarded, and Phasael, accompanied by Hyrcan, set out on the journey. Upon their arrival in Galilee, they were conducted to

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Barzapharnes, who received them courteously, and gave them accommodations suitable to their rank. Phasael was soon after informed of such particulars as fully convinced him of his dangerous situation, and induced him to expostulate with Barzapharnes on his injustice; but the treacherous Parthian solemnly disclaimed the charge, and preserved all the necessary appearances of friendship, till he supposed Herod had likewise been entrapped, when he ordered the Jewish priest and tetrarch to be both thrown into close confinement.

B. C. 40. Pacorus had been sent back to Jerusalem for the express purpose of surprising Herod; but that young warrior, having timely notice of the plot, conveyed himself, with all his family, friends, and valuable effects, out of the metropolis; and proceeded, under a numerous escort of his own troops, towards Idumea. In this journey he met with several obstructions from the Parthians and Antigonians; but his extraordinary valour, with that of his guards, enabled him to accomplish his design; and he resolutely proceeded, sword in hand, till he arrived at the town of Thressa, where his brother Joseph met him with a powerful reinforcement.

Having left his family and treasures in the fortress of Massada, under the care of Joseph, and a garrison of eight hundred men, he sat out for Petra, the metropolis of Arabia, intending to borrow a sum of money from the king (whom he had formerly obliged), for the purpose of purchasing his brother's freedom. But the ungrateful Malchus sent him orders to quit his territories, so that he was compelled to change his measures and apply to the Romans.

His flight from Jerusalem having, in the mean

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time, been discovered, the Parthians plundered his palace, together with the city, and circumjacent country. They then invested Antigonus with the supreme dignity in the Jewish state, according to their agreement, and Phasael and Hyrcan were brought in chains to the metropolis. The new monarch did not think it advisable to put the high-priest to death, but incapacitated him from officiating at the altar, by causing his ears to be cut off; while Phasael, in the extremity of despair, eluded the cruelty of his enemies by an act of suicide.

Herod, on his arrival at Rome, applied first to Antony, and then to Octavius, for needful succours, and urged his request so forcibly, that the triumvirs resolved to assist him to the utmost of their power, and formed a design in his favour which far exceeded his expectations. The senate was immediately convened, and Herod introduced by Messala and Atratinus, who set forth the great services of Antipater's family to the Romans, and represented Antigonus as a seditious person and a known enemy to their nation. Herod was, accordingly, elected by all the senators to fill the Jewish throne, and Antigonus was voted an enemy. The ceremony of inauguration was then performed with the utmost solemnity, and Herod was regaled by the triumvirs for seven days, at the expiration of which he set out for Brundusium and sailed from thence to Ptolemais.

During these important transactions, Antigonus had invested the fortress of Massada so closely, that the garrison, though amply furnished with other provisions, were greatly distressed for want of water, insomuch that Joseph was contriving



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means to break through the besiegers in order to procure succour from Malchus, king of Arabia, who was now ashamed of his ungenerous conduct towards Herod. The necessity of this sally was, however, fortunately obviated by a heavy rain, which filled all the cisterns; and Joseph exerted himself to make a vigorous defence, till his brother should come to his relief.

Herod had no sooner landed at Ptolemais than he assembled a body of troops, which augmented so rapidly in consequence of his munificence, that almost the whole province of Galilee espoused his cause. Ventidius, the Roman general in Syria, was also commanded to assist him with all his forces, so that he was soon in a condition to oppose Antigonus, and to relieve his distressed family. Having reduced Joppa, which was a place of too considerable importance to be left behind in the hands of an enemy, he advanced against his competitor, and compelled him to relinquish his attempts on Massada.

By this time Herod's army was so considerably increased, that he boldly marched against Jerusalem, where he caused a general amnesty to be proclaimed, extending it to all the adherents of Antigonus, who should come over to him within a limited time. Antigonus, on the other hand, publicly accused the Roman senate of injustice in setting a person on the throne whose birth excluded him from the succession; and the contest between the rivals rose at length to such a height, that some volleys of arrows were discharged upon the besiegers, who at the same time were disturbed by a mutiny. Herod immediately sent out for supplies, which came in such abundance,

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that all pretence of revolt was cut off, and the Roman troops, after plundering Jericho of an immense treasure, were sent into winter quarters.

The advanced state of the season precluding the commencement of the intended siege, Herod dispatched his brother Joseph with one thousand foot, and four hundred horse, into Idumea, whilst himself placed his family securely in the city of Samaria. He afterwards took several important fortresses in Galilee, and effectually destroyed the banditti who occupied the rocky parts of that province.

He then went to Mark Antony, who was employed in the siege of Samarata, and rendered him some important services by his gallantry; in return for which the triumvir, on the reduction of the city, left Sosius governor of Syria, with positive orders to assist Herod with the Roman forces under his command, whenever such a reinforcement should be necessary.

Herod, on his return, found his affairs in a very unpleasant situation; his brother Joseph, in opposition to his desire, had made an attack against Jericho with his own forces, and five legions with which he had been furnished by Machaeras; but the Roman cavalry being totally unfit for such rocky ground as he was then encamped upon, his army was defeated, and himself slain. This unfortunate accident was immediately followed by the entire revolt of Galilee, where the most opulent of Herod's friends were barbarously thrown into the lake of Tiberias. Idumea was also on the point of revolting, but the appearance of Herod at the head of a fresh army effected a sudden change, and inspired his partisans with new resolution. The province of Galilee was immediately reduced; and an engagement soon ensued be-

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tween the two antagonists, in which Herod obtained a complete victory, and ensanguined the field with the blood of his enemies. His eagerness to revenge Joseph's death made him pursue the fugitives with such astonishing swiftness, that he might have proceeded immediately to Jerusalem and have taken it with the utmost facility, had he not been prevented by a violent storm. Antigonus was, at the same time, so completely exhausted, that he was almost tempted to abandon his capital to the victorious enemy: but the approach of winter induced Herod to put his forces into winter quarters, and consequently gave a respite to Antigonus.

Having adopted this method, with a design to commence the siege of Jerusalem early in the spring, Herod went to Samaria, and consummated his marriage with Mariamne, a princess highly worthy of his tenderest care and affection, whether considered with respect to her illustrious family, her exalted virtue and merit, or her personal beauty and accomplishments. By this time he was reinforced with thirty thousand men, and Sosius had been ordered to march to his assistance with eleven legions, and six thousand horse, besides some Syrian troops that were hired as auxiliaries.

With this formidable army he proceeded to the metropolis of Judea, while the besieged were, on the other hand, equally numerous and resolute, the city being thronged with persons from all parts of the country. For some time the besiegers were greatly annoyed by frequent sallies, but at length the Romans scaled the outward wall, notwithstanding the vigorous opposition of the garrison; and in ten days more they got

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within the second, when some of the galleries belonging to the temple being set on fire, Herod endeavoured to throw the odium of that circumstance upon his rival. On the reduction of the lower city, the besieged fled for shelter to the upper, and to the temple, where they were reduced to great extremities by famine, it being the sabbatic year, wherein they were forbidden to cultivate the land. In this condition they resolutely built a new wall instead of that which had been beaten down; countermined the enemy repeatedly, and fought sometimes above, and sometimes below ground, with all the fury of confirmed despair, till at length a general assault terminated the seige, and compelled them to surrender.

The Roman troops had no sooner obtained entrance into the upper city, than they dispersed themselves into all parts in search of plunder, and massacred a great number of the wretched inhabitants. The very sanctuary was on the point of undergoing the same fate as the common habitations, but here Herod interposed, and put a stop to all further devastation, by satisfying the rapacity of the soldiers by a large donative out of his own coffers.

Thus was the holy city taken, after a siege of six months, and with its reduction terminated the reign of the Asmoneans, which had continued one hundred and twenty-nine years, from Judas Maccabeus to Antigonus, the last male of that family who held the reins of government. Sosius, having accomplished Antony's desire by establishing Herod in the royal dignity, presented a crown of gold to the temple, and departed with the deposed prince, B. C. 37.



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who was loaden with chains, and afterwards condemned to death at the earnest solicitations of Herod.

## SECT. V.

*From the Accession of Herod to the Birth of Christ.*

HEROD had scarcely assumed the insignia of his new dignity, when he was compelled to employ his thoughts on two important subjects, viz. the means of replenishing his treasury after the large demands which had been made upon it by his auxiliaries; and the suppression of the opposite faction, which retained an indelible affection for the Asmonean family, and an insurmountable aversion for that of Antipater.

To answer the first necessity, he caused all the gold, silver, and other valuables, found in the metropolis, to be seized and deposited in his own palace; by which rapine he soon amassed a considerable treasure; but as a great part of it was given to the Romans in payment for their recent services, he reimbursed himself by causing the wealthiest persons of the Antigonian party to be put to death, and confiscating their estates. Such was his horrid vigilance upon this occasion, that he ordered his guards to examine whether the bodies were really dead when they were carried out for sepulture; and to prevent the removal of any riches from their habitations, at the time of the funeral. In short, his necessities were so urgent, and his bounty so lavish toward his

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favourites, that he spared no extortion, notwithstanding the distressed condition of the country, for want of cultivation, threatened his subjects with the calamities of famine.

Hyrcan, the unfortunate pontiff, who had fallen a prey to the treachery of Antigonus and the Parthians, and who had been taken prisoner to Parthia, was released from confinement by Phraartes, and permitted to reside in Babylon, where he enjoyed the respect and unfeigned affection of the Jews who dwelt in that city, and also of those who lived beyond the Euphrates: but he no sooner heard of Herod's accession to the throne of Judea, than he conceived an ardent desire of visiting his native country, and spending the residue of his life in the beloved city of Jerusalem. Having communicated these thoughts to some of his friends, he was earnestly advised to abandon them, and to remain content with that veneration which was paid to his high birth and dignity in Babylon: but the pressing invitations of the monarch were so perfectly consonant with his own wishes, that he was deaf to remonstrance, and resolved to return to the land which contained the temple of his God.

Herod was, in the mean time, much disturbed by domestic contentions; and was compelled, though much against his inclination, to invest Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne with the pontifical dignity. This condescension to Alexandra, his mother-in-law, was merely political; and that princess, whose haughty and enterprising spirit rendered her a dangerous enemy, was soon after confined to her palace. In this emergency she received an invitation to the court of Cleopatra, for herself and

B.C. 35.

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son; but, after contriving a singular method of escape, the fugitives were arrested and brought back; though Herod's dread of the Egyptian queen, induced him to dissemble his resentment.

At the ensuing feast of tabernacles, the new high-priest, who was about seventeen years of age, officiated in his sacred capacity with such extraordinary gracefulness, and appeared so majestic in the pontifical robes, that the people, reflecting on the merit of his ancestors, could not forbear expressing their admiration. This circumstance inflamed Herod's jealousy to so ungovernable a pitch, that he immediately resolved on the destruction of the amiable youth; and accordingly hired some base wretches to put a period to his life, by holding him under water in a bath, to which he was invited after the solemnity. This diabolical action was glossed over with the pretence of being purely accidental, and the result of mere diversion; and the king not only seemed to believe this report, but put himself into the deepest mourning, ordered his obsequies to be performed with all possible magnificence, and caused a stately monument to be erected to the memory of the unfortunate sufferer. But all this affectation was easily seen through by the people, and only served to render the author of the calamity more odious to the nation at large, and particularly to his own family.

Alexandra having written an account of these cruel proceedings to Cleopatra, that princess earnestly importuned Antony to take vengeance on the murderer, in hopes that his death would facilitate her wish of enjoying the Jewish revenue. Antony, accordingly, commanded Herod to appear before him at Laodicea, in order to clear himself of this

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heavy charge; and Herod, however reluctant, was necessitated to obey. He however took such precautions, and bribed his judge so high, that on the day of audience he was most basely absolved; and Cleopatra's avaricious demands were pacified with the province of Cœlo-Syria.

Herod, previous to his departure on this business, commanded his uncle Joseph, whom he left in care of the government, to put Mariamne to death in case he should be condemned by Antony; as he was apprehensive the triumvir had formed a design inimical to his honour upon the fame of his queen's beauty. This injunction was imprudently communicated to Mariamne, who ever after entertained the utmost dread of her sanguinary consort: and Alexandra was so violently exasperated, that she earnestly entreated Joseph to conduct herself and daughter from the city, and place them beneath the protection of the Romans, who were then encamped in the neighbourhood; but this project was soon rendered unnecessary by the news of Herod's acquittal.

Salome, the king's sister, had in the mean time made herself acquainted with these deliberations; and on her brother's return, accused the virtuous Mariamne of a criminal correspondence with Joseph. The queen boldly asserted, the rectitude of her conduct to Herod, in open defiance of her calumniator; but happening to upbraid him with his cruel order, he was fully persuaded that nothing less than guilty familiarity could have prevailed on his uncle to disclose the fatal secret. He therefore commanded the ill-fated Joseph to be put to death, without permitting any explanation, and caused Alexandra to be loaded with chains and thrown into prison.

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Cleopatra having conceived a violent resentment against Herod, for his inattention to her amorous advances, when she visited his court on her return from the Euphrates, persuaded her Roman lover to order him on an expedition against the Arabians; and, having obtained her request, sent Athenion, one of her own generals, to join him as an auxiliary, though in reality he was commanded to ruin him. Herod, upon the first encounter, gave the enemy a great overthrow; and was upon the point of gaining a second victory, when Athenion fell suddenly upon the Jews, and cut most of them in pieces; whilst Herod and a small remnant of his followers saved their lives by a precipitate flight.

B. C. 31. In the course of the next year, Judea was shaken with an extraordinary earthquake, which destroyed a prodigious number of cattle, and buried some thousands of the people beneath the ruins of their habitations. Upon the report of this calamity, the Arabians invaded the kingdom, expecting to have found it utterly defenceless; but Herod defeated them in two successive engagements, and compelled them to sue for a cessation of hostilities.

B. C. 30. Herod's happiness was soon afterwards disturbed by the defeat of his patron at Actium, and the dread of Augustus's resentment; but, perceiving the desperate state of Antony's affairs, and finding him unwilling to sacrifice Cleopatra to his own safety, he resolved to make his peace with the conqueror, on the best terms he could obtain. Having taken this determination, he caused Hyrcan, the venerable pontiff, to be beheaded, on pretence of carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the king of

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Arabia; but in reality to rid himself of the only surviving male of the Asmonean race. He then sent his queen and her mother Alexandra into the fortress of Massada, under the care of his treasurer and one of his chief confidants, with express orders to put these princesses to death on the first intelligence of his ill success; and committed his own mother and her daughter Salome to the care of his brother Pheroras, with an exhortation to seize on the Jewish crown, and defend it to the last extremity, in case his expedition should prove unfortunate.

On his arrival at Rhodes, he obtained an audience of Augustus, and addressed him in a speech so well composed and appropriate, that the emperor commanded him to wear the diadem in his presence, and honoured him with several other marks of peculiar esteem. Herod, elated at this success, made some noble presents to Augustus and his favourites, and returned to his metropolis highly pleased with his acquisitions of honour and authority; but his felicity was materially damped by the reception he met with from his beloved consort, and her exasperated mother, who had, during his absence, found means to discover the fatal orders he had left with the governors of Massada.

Augustus passing through Syria, in his way to Egypt, was entertained by Herod at Ptolemais, with incredible magnificence: besides a present of eight hundred talents, he furnished the army with provisions, as they marched through some barren deserts, where they might otherwise have been driven to the utmost extremities; and he accompanied the emperor as far as Pelusium. The same magnificent reception was given at

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Augustus's return; and that prince was so greatly delighted with the complaisance and munificence of his Jewish tributary, that he made him a present of the four thousand Gauls who had served as body guards to Cleopatra; and restored him such a number of cities, as considerably augmented both his territory and revenue.

B. C. 29. Mariamne's affection was, in the mean time, totally alienated from her husband; and Salome, her inveterate enemy, continued to do her all the ill offices in her power, till at length the unfortunate queen was publicly tried and condemned to die, for a crime to which her heart was an entire stranger. She bore her fate with becoming intrepidity, and terminated with her sufferings all the happiness of her tyrannic husband.

Salome having hurried the execution, lest some discovery of her own treachery might frustrate her cruel design, or the ungovernable affection of her brother produce a revocation of his sentence, now triumphed in the accomplishment of her desires; but Herod was oppressed with such indescribable remorse, that his life became a burthen, his favourite diversions grew insipid, and in the midst of his highest festivity he would call involuntarily on the name of Mariamne, and order her to be brought into his presence. A grievous pestilence which swept off great numbers of his subjects, tended to augment his misery; and a violent distemper soured his temper still more; till at length he degenerated to such a state of brutish cruelty, that he sacrificed friend and foe alike, to his ungovernable fury; and continued to oppress his people in the most arbitrary manner till the hour of his death.

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Alexandra was soon put to death after her injured daughter, for attempting to form a party during Herod's indisposition; and Costobares, the husband of Salome, was first divorced, and then delivered to the executioner for having protected some of the chief supporters of the Asmonean race. Several of the Jewish ceremonies were now abolished, and foreign customs introduced; a stately theatre was built in the city, and a spacious amphitheatre in the suburbs; musicians, players, coursers, and gladiators, were engaged for the royal amusement; and public games were ordered to be celebrated every fifth year in honour of Augustus.

These innovations, joined to his unparalleled cruelty, inspired the Jews with the most unconquerable aversion, and ten of the boldest of the malcontents entered the new theatre with daggers concealed under their garments, for the purpose of delivering their nation by the death of the tyrant: but their design was discovered, and they were put to death by the most cruel method that could be devised. The populace having detected the informer, cut him in pieces and threw his flesh to their dogs; and every symptom of a revolution began to appear, when Herod provided for his own safety by fortifying Jerusalem, rebuilding Samaria, and garrisoning all the most important fortresses in Judea.

About this time, which was the thirteenth year of his reign, the country was visited by a grievous drought, which soon brought on a famine, and terminated in a raging pestilence. In this calamity the king exerted himself to procure a supply of provisions from Egypt, and caused them to be distributed among his B. C. 23.



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mournful subjects, insomuch that those who had lately detested, now began to admire him for his princely generosity; but he soon relapsed into his former cruelties, and convinced them that his heart was still callous to all the tender feelings of humanity.

The following year he married another Mariamne, daughter of a Jewish priest of Alexandria; and soon after his nuptials built the magnificent palace of Herodian, on a pleasant hill about seven miles distant from Jerusalem, whither the Jews immediately resorted, and built round it, so that it was soon encompassed by a considerable city.

He now sent his two favourite sons whom he had by Hyrcan's grand-daughter to be educated at Rome, where Augustus assigned them apartments in the royal palace, and expressed his sense of the confidence their father had reposed in him, by giving him full power to nominate either of them for his successor. He likewise added several provinces to the kingdom of Judea; appointed Herod his procurator in Syria, and bestowed a tetrarchy on his brother Phecoras.

Herod being thus honoured by the emperor, and having amassed an immense treasure by his rapacious proceedings, resolved to render himself popular, and to eternize his memory by rebuilding the temple, which he accordingly did in the most sumptuous and elegant manner.

Whilst this work was carrying on with all possible expedition, the Jewish monarch made a voyage to Rome to pay his compliments to Augustus, and a paternal visit to his sons. He expressed himself in the most grateful terms for the favours he had recently received, and for the

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great improvement the princes had made during their residence in the imperial city. Having experienced the most cordial reception, and been honoured with some fresh tokens of his great patron's esteem, he returned to Judea with his sons, who were received with universal acclamations on account of their majestic appearance and deportment. Soon after their arrival they were both married, Alexander to Glaphyra, princess of Cappadocia; and Aristobulus to Berenice, the daughter of Salome. That love and admiration which the people expressed for these accomplished youths was, however, so far from gratifying the turbulent Salome, that she used her utmost endeavours to alienate their father's affections from them by the most base and unwarrantable stratagems. In consequence of her repeated accusations and malicious hints, Herod caused Antipater, another of his sons, who had been hitherto educated privately, to be brought to court, where he heaped such favours on him, as only tended to rouse the resentment of the other brothers, and made them utter many indiscreet speeches against their father, which their enemies immediately used to facilitate their ruin.

Agrippa, who had been received at Jerusalem with every demonstration of respect and cordiality, was now requested to take Antipater to Rome, so that the populace began to look upon him as the appointed successor. The young prince set out accordingly, but, fearing lest his competitors should regain their father's affection during his absence, he wrote repeatedly to court, and engaged his friends to prejudice Herod against them, till at length the king began to consider

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them as enemies, and resolved to bring them to a public trial before Augustus. The emperor being then at Aquileia, Herod went thither, accused his sons of high treason, and demanded justice against them in the most vehement terms. The cruelty of this proceeding affected the princes so deeply, that they were both compelled to give vent to their emotions by a flood of tears; but Alexander pleaded his own and his brother's cause with such becoming modesty, that Augustus and all the auditors were fully convinced of their innocence. A reconciliation was, therefore, effected by the emperor; but the jealousy of Herod, the indiscretion of his sons, and the indefatigable exertions of their enemies, soon laid the foundation for fresh dissensions.

B. C. 10. The city of Cæsarea being finished, Herod caused the dedication of it to be performed with all imaginable splendour, and appointed games to be performed every fifth year. At this time he entertained his guests, who were very considerable, both in number and quality, with such extraordinary magnificence, that Augustus observed, his soul was too great for his dominions, and that he ought to have possessed the crowns of Syria and Egypt. Yet such was the strange inconsistency of this monarch's actions, that immediately after this festival he broke open the sepulchres of David and Solomon in the night, carried off a quantity of rich vessels that had been deposited there, and actually proceeded to search the coffins of the deceased monarchs, till a miraculous flame destroyed two of his guards, and impeded his further search. To make some reparation for this abominable sacrilege, he caused a beautiful

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monument of white marble to be erected at the entrance of the tomb.

The iniquitous Salome had, by this time, raised her brother's jealousy of the young princes to such a height, that his conduct was equally inconsistent with the duties of a father and the dignity of a king. Two of his favourite confidants were put to the rack, on the accusation of having been corrupted by Alexander; and Alexander himself was thrown into prison, from whence he sent his father four several confessions; and at the same time accused Salome and Pheroras of being concerned in the plot. By this means, Herod's mind was utterly distracted, and he abandoned himself to the greatest excesses of cruelty. Nothing was to be heard of in the city but racks, imprisonments, and barbarous executions; and in the palace, the tyrant was so tormented by guilt and fear and jealousy, that he would frequently start from his bed as if pursued by the conspirators; and continually looked with a suspicious eye upon all who surrounded him. But while it was hourly expected that his paroxysms of rage would have terminated in lunacy, or hastened his son's death, Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, arrived at Jerusalem, and by his good offices effected a reconciliation. Pheroras, perceiving this sudden change, entered the presence chamber in a mourning habit, prostrated himself at the feet of his sovereign, and acknowledged himself the author of all the calumnies that had been raised against Alexander and Aristobulus. Upon this information Herod's fury subsided, and after accompanying Archelaus as far as Antioch on his return, he resolved to



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visit Augustus, and make him acquainted with the whole affair.

B. C. 8. On his return from Rome he caused the dedication of the temple to be performed with due solemnity and magnificence; and in the following spring undertook to suppress the Trachonitish banditti, who had lately made some terrible inroads into Judea. He accordingly marched into Arabia, defeated the robbers, demolished their castle, and returned victorious to his metropolis; but Syllæus, prefect of Syria, wrote such an account of this expedition to the emperor, that he sent Herod a very severe reproof, and would certainly have renounced his friend had he not been convinced, after some time, that his prefect's accusations were malicious and greatly exaggerated.

Salome had again alarmed her brother with an account of fresh plots and intended assassinations; and though nothing could be proved against the objects of her hatred, but that they had designed to retire into some other country where they might be free from their father's tyranny, the jealous king believed all the rest upon this single evidence, and immediately dispatched messengers with a letter to Rome, in order to obtain justice against the royal conspirators. Augustus having perused the letter, and found that Herod was obstinately bent upon the destruction of his sons, issued out orders for them to be brought to trial at Berytus, before Archelaus and all the governors of the neighbouring provinces; and, in case they were found guilty, he granted permission to their father to punish them according to his own discretion.

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Herod immediately convened the governors, but purposely omitted sending to Archelaus, lest he should be biassed by motives of partiality; and having left the unfortunate princes under a strong guard in a small town belonging to the Sidonians, pleaded his own cause before an assembly of five hundred persons, but with such violence, as rather excited their indignation than pity. After a full hearing, Volumnius pronounced sentence of death, and the rest of the judges acquiesced in his opinion; but the time and manner of the execution was left to the unnatural accuser, who caused his amiable sons to be strangled at Sebaste, and from thence carried to the sepulchre of their Asmonean relatives at Alexandrion.

Shortly after this tragical event, the king issued an edict, commanding the Jewish nation to take an oath of allegiance to Augustus and himself; but this edict being contrary to the Mosaic law, was resolutely opposed by seven thousand persons of the sect of Pharisees. Herod, provoked at their contumacy, condemned them to a severe fine, which fell, amongst others, upon Pheroras's wife. Pheroras having entered into a plot with Antipater for Herod's destruction, gladly embraced the opportunity of retiring to his tetrarchy, and took a solemn oath that he would never return to court during his brother's reign. Antipater, at the same time, made interest to get an invitation to Rome; and thus these two politicians contrived to shun the dread of discovery, whilst their instruments were busily employed in the prosecution of their designs. But on the death of Pheroras, the treason was completely unravelled, and Herod had the mortification to find a real and implacable enemy in that son for whom he

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had withdrawn his love from two virtuous youths, and finally sentenced them to an ignominious death. Dorio, the mother of Antipater, having given poison to Pheroras, in order that he might destroy his brother, was stripped of her costly ornaments and banished from court; and Mariamne the second being accused of some share in the plot, was driven into exile, whilst her son Herod was disinherited, and her father deposed from the pontifical office, to which he had been raised by his royal son-in-law.

B. C. 6. About this time, Zacharias, a virtuous priest of the course of Abiah, was honoured with a celestial vision whilst he offered the sacred incense in the temple, and received an assurance, that his wife Elizabeth should bear a son, who should be a Nazarite to God, and the harbinger of the promised Messiah. The venerable priest reflecting on the advanced age of himself and his spouse, requested that a token might be granted for the confirmation of his faith; and the angel granted his petition in such a manner as might, at once, reprove and obviate his doubts. Zacharias was instantly deprived of the faculty of speech, and continued dumb till the heavenly prediction was accomplished.

Six months after this singular occurrence, the same vision appeared to a young virgin, called Mary, of the lineage of David, who resided at Nazareth, under the guardianship of her espoused husband Joseph, saluting her as the highly favoured of God, and informing her that she was chosen to bear the Redeemer of the World, to whom she should give the significant name of Jesus, or Saviour, according to the prophecies

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long since delivered. The astonished maiden expressed a doubt of the *possibility* of such a circumstance; but on the angel's declaring that he had predicted a *miraculous* conception, and reminding her that nothing was impossible with God, she submitted with humble confidence to the will of Heaven, and hastened to acquaint her cousin Elizabeth with these transporting tidings.

Elizabeth being delivered of the promised child, gave him the name of John, in obedience to the divine injunction; and Zacharias having expressed his consent to it in writing, found his tongue immediately loosed, and his heart inspired with the utmost gratitude to the Author of his felicity, in consequence of which he uttered such rapturous predictions, as inspired the auditors with singular hopes concerning his young descendant.

The blessed Virgin now began to exhibit such tokens of pregnancy, as induced her husband to contrive some means of giving her a private divorce, without exposing her to the rigour of the law; but being apprised, in a dream, that her conception was altogether miraculous, and that her son was appointed to be the Saviour of the World, he laid aside his design, and resolved to continue his patronage and protection. Meanwhile Bethlehem, the city of David, being pointed out by the prophet as the birth-place of the Messiah, Providence so ordered it that the decree of Augustus for taking a new survey of the Roman empire should reach Judea at this time; which obliged the Virgin and her pious spouse to repair thither to be enrolled among the descendants of David. The great concourse of people coming to that place, laid this obscure family under the necessity of lodging in a stable, where Mary brought

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forth her divine son, and laid him in a manger; while an angel, at the head of a celestial choir, proclaimed the wondrous nativity to certain shepherds, who were keeping watch over their flocks by night; and the appearance of a miraculous star induced the Eastern magi to hasten to the Jewish metropolis in quest of the new-born king.

Upon the first inquiry of the wise men, respecting the place of his birth, the whole city were moved; and the grand sanhedrim directed them to Bethlehem, upon the authority of their ancient prophets. Herod immediately began to consider the new-born Messiah as a dangerous rival, and formed a diabolical design for his destruction, which was, however, frustrated by the interposition of divine Providence.

The holy child having been worshipped with due reverence by the magi, was, on the fortieth day, brought to Jerusalem to be presented in the temple, and to be redeemed according to the Mosaic law concerning the first-born. On this occasion, Simeon, a venerable Jew, of consummate piety, and endowed with the spirit of prophecy, took him in his arms, foretold the sorrows which should hereafter lacerate the heart of his mother, and exclaimed in a holy transport, "Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy promised salvation!" His testimony was also accompanied by that of an old prophetess named Anna, who coming at that instant into the temple, began to publish this new-born Saviour to all the faithful Israelites, who expected the fulfilment of their Maker's most invaluable promise.

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## SECT. VI.

*From the Birth of Christ to the total Destruction of Jerusalem, and the Dispersion of the Jewish Nation.*

HEROD was now distracted with new proofs of his own danger, and the infidelity of his nearest relatives. Some malicious accounts from Rome overwhelmed him with the deepest distress; and a fresh supply of poison sent by Antipater, occasioned more important and more horrid discoveries than had yet been made respecting that unnatural son. Herod immediately sent for the traitor to Jerusalem, on pretence of securing him in the succession, and (having issued out an order for the destruction of all the male infants near Bethlehem, in the vain hope of destroying his new-born rival) caused him to be publicly arraigned of high treason. The trial was peculiarly interesting, as Herod discovered the most poignant anguish at the recollection of his murdered sons, who had fallen by Antipater's stratagems; and the culprit exerted all his eloquence to set aside the heavy charges that were brought against him. Some of the poison mentioned in the evidence was, however, brought into court, and given to a condemned criminal, who died immediately; and some letters were intercepted, which obviated every doubt, and silenced the prisoner's impious protestations. He was accordingly ordered into close confinement, and a full account of the proceedings against him was sent to the emperor.

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Whilst the ambassadors were on their journey to Rome, Herod, enfeebled by age, sickness, and constant inquietudes, fell into a violent disease, which rendered him so extremely morose and choleric, that he became a burthen to himself and a terror to all his attendants. Finding his end approaching, he settled his affairs; appointed his youngest son to succeed him on the throne; bequeathed a considerable sum to Augustus; and left a noble fortune to the unworthy Salome. These arrangements were scarcely made, when a seditious tumult was raised in the city by two Jewish doctors, who, having heard that the king was dead, persuaded their disciples to pull down the structures which had been raised contrary to the law. They accordingly proceeded to the temple gate, and began to demolish a golden eagle of exquisite workmanship which Herod had set up in honour of the emperor; but, on being attacked by a body of the royal troops, the majority of them were soon dispersed, and the remainder carried to the king, who, after some time, condemned them to be burnt alive.

The wretched monarch, whose disease now became so loathsome and intolerable that a description of it would but shock the humane reader, perceived by this last indignity the universal detestation in which he was held by his subjects, and meditated such a dreadful expedient to prevent their rejoicing at his decease, as scarcely ever entered into the heart of the most sanguinary tyrant. He issued out a proclamation, commanding all the chief Jews to assemble at Jericho, on a certain day, under pain of death; and upon their arrival, ordered them all to be confined in the Hippodrome; at the same time obliging Salome

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and her husband Alexas to promise that they would cause them all to be massacred as soon as the breath quitted his body.

About this time the messengers returned from Rome with Augustus's approbation of Antipater's sentence, which seemed to afford the king the utmost satisfaction, in spite of all his tortures. Antipater was immediately put to death; and Herod, having altered his will in favour of Archelaus, expired soon after, in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh after his advancement to the crown of Judea.

Salome and Alexas were so far from executing the last inhuman orders of this tyrannical prince, that they endeavoured to conceal them from the nation, and hastened to acquaint the prisoners in the Circus that they were at full liberty to depart to their respective habitations. The news of the king's decease being then made public, the chief officers and soldiery were assembled at Jericho; Archelaus was proclaimed king by virtue of Herod's appointment; and the people unanimously promised him the same allegiance which they had shown to his father. A. D. 1.

Archelaus, to evince his gratitude to his predecessor, prepared a funeral answerable to his wealth and dignity. The body was laid on a sumptuous bier enriched with a profusion of precious stones, having the royal diadem on his head, and holding a sceptre in hand. His sons and grandsons, his sister and her husband, and all his other near relations, marched solemnly by his side. These were followed by all his officers, both civil and military, according to their rank. Among the latter, his guards led the van; then came the Thracians; next the Germans; and last, the



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Gauls, or Galatians; all suitably armed in order of battle; while five hundred of his domestics closed the procession, and scattered aromatic perfumes among the spectators. The cavalcade proceeded to the castle of Herodion, about one thousand paces distant from Jericho, where they deposited the corpse of their late sovereign, and returned from thence to Jerusalem; where the new monarch, having mourned seven days for his father, according to the Jewish custom, gave the people a magnificent feast.

By a singular clause in Herod's will, the sovereignty of Archelaus was in reality invalid, and merely nominal, till it should be confirmed by Cæsar: in consequence of which, he was obliged to visit Rome; though his journey was for some time delayed by a popular tumult, which terminated in the death of three thousand rebels, and the loss of many of the king's troops. These disorders being quelled, he left the care of the government to his brother Philip, and set out, accompanied with several of his relatives and acquaintance, who were anxious to assist him with their interest or advice; while his aunt Salome, and her children, mingled into the company for the express purpose of obstructing his confirmation.

On their arrival at Rome, Archelaus presented a memorial to Cæsar, in which he exhibited his title to the regal dignity, the particulars of Herod's last will, and the inventory of the treasure which that monarch left behind him. Antipas, who had been appointed to the government by Herod's *first* will, and who was now persuaded by the subtle Salome to oppose his brother, immediately presented another memorial, which contained such

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allegations as were most likely to invalidate the pretensions of his rival. The emperor having perused both the writings, convened an assembly of his friends to examine the respective claims; and Caius, son of Agrippa by the princess Julia, was desired to sit as president. On the day of audience, Antipater, the son of Salome, an elegant speaker and inveterate enemy to Archelaus, accused that prince of various offences, and insisted that Herod never thought of appointing him for his successor, while he had the proper use of his faculties, but had expressly nominated Antipas to that dignity. These accusations, and the bitter invectives with which they were accompanied, were answered by Damascen, an old counsellor of the deceased monarch, with equal courage and moderation; and at the conclusion of his admirable defence, Archelaus prostrated himself before the emperor with such genuine marks of humility as moved his compassion, and induced him to promise that he would do nothing contrary to Herod's will. The court was then dismissed without any further proceedings; as Augustus was desirous of meditating at leisure on the petition of the other princes.

During these transactions at Rome, the turbulent Jews had raised new commotions in their metropolis, which were, however, suppressed by Varus's speedy arrival from Antioch, and the punishment of the ringleaders. On his return to Antioch, he left Sabinus, with a Roman legion, to keep the city in awe: this general, perceiving the superiority of his forces over those of the Jews, resolved to convert the treasures of the Herodian family to his own use, and actually pillaged the treasury of the temple of four hun-

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dred talents. The Jews, who came at that time in crowds to celebrate the approaching feasts of Pentecost, were violently exasperated at these tyrannical proceedings, and immediately divided themselves into three bodies, one of which besieged him and his troops in the palace, whilst the other two possessed themselves of the hippodrome and the temple; so that, being completely enclosed, he was compelled to wait for a reinforcement from Varus.

At the same period, Judea was overrun with freebooters and seditious persons, who hoped to enrich themselves by the public calamities. Judas, the son of Ezechias, captain of a banditti, whom Herod had put to death, collected a band of ruffians at Sephoris in Galilee, and ravaged all the open country on pretence of revenging his father's untimely fate. Simeon, a person formerly intrusted with high concerns, and greatly respected by the Jews, led a body of men to Jericho; reduced the royal palace to ashes; and afterwards proceeded to ravage the country; till he was at length defeated by the governor of Syria; and Athronges, a shepherd, of gigantic stature and brutal courage, diffused a general terror among the peaceful inhabitants by his acts of rapine and cruelty, till he was fortunately subdued by the royal party.

Varus, having received intelligence of Sabinus's perilous situation, hastened, at the head of his two legions, with four troops of horse and some foot, which he had drawn from the neighbouring tetrarchs, to Ptolemais, where he received some fresh auxiliaries. He then marched with one division of his army towards Samaria, whilst his son led the other into that part of Galilee

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nearest to Ptolemais. The former permitted his troops to plunder and burn several villages in their route: and the latter, among other cruelties, set fire to the noble city of Sephais, reduced it to a heap of rubbish, and sold the ill-fated inhabitants by auction. The mutineers at Jerusalem provided, in the mean time, for their safety, by precipitate flight or abject submission; but Varus took such vigilant measures for the detection of the fugitives, that no less than two thousand were doomed to expiate their crimes by the agonizing and ignominious death of the cross.

A deputation was sent, about this time, from Judea to oppose the election of Archelaus, to express an abhorrence of the Herodian family, and to request an abolition of the monarchical government. But Augustus resolved to act in such a manner as might convince the world of his friendship to Herod and to his children. He accordingly bestowed one half of the kingdom upon Archelaus, under the title of tetrarch, or governor of a nation; with an assurance that he would invest him with the titles of royalty as soon as he rendered himself worthy of such distinction; and the remainder was divided between Herod's other sons, Philip and Antipas.

This division of the Jewish kingdom was scarcely settled, when a new pretender started up, who quickly drew a numerous body of followers to him, by assuming the name and character of the late Alexander, Herod's son by Mariamne. The striking resemblance between the impostor and that unfortunate prince effectually deceived the generality of the people, who spared no pains to render his entry into Rome as splendid as possible. When he arrived at that metropolis, with crowds



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of Jews who had flocked from all parts to pay him homage as a surviving branch of the Asmonean race, the emperor sent Celadus, one of his freedmen, and formerly a companion of the young prince's, to bring this newly risen Alexander to his presence. Celadus was as easily deceived as the populace, but Augustus soon discovered a manifest deficiency in the port and majesty of this pretender, from what he had observed in the true Alexander, which, together with a certain callosity in his hands, fully convinced him of the cheat. An explanation consequently ensued, which terminated in a full confession of the imposture, when the mock prince was sent to the galleys; an artful adventurer who contrived the plot was sentenced to be hanged; and the Jews were permitted to return to their respective homes, sufficiently punished for their credulity by so melancholy a disappointment.

Archelaus had no sooner returned into Judea, than he began to exhibit some tokens of his arbitrary and vindictive temper, notwithstanding the public odium attached to the house of Herod, and the caution given by the emperor. The commencement of his government, however, proved tolerably peaceable, and he seems to have abandoned himself to tyranny and luxury without considering the *result* of such preposterous conduct; but on the representation of the public sufferings, Augustus sent an agent to bring him immediately to Rome, and, having heard both the accusers and the accused with perfect equanimity, he ordered the ungrateful ethnarch to be banished to the city of Vienne in Dauphine, and caused Judea to be taxed as a province of the Roman empire.

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Cyrenius, governor of Syria, was now dispatched with orders to sell Archelaus's palaces, and to seize upon all his treasures; and Coponius, the Roman general of horse, was stationed in Judea, to overawe the populace, who were thrown into the utmost consternation by the new edict. His presence, together with the good offices of Jsazar, the high-priest, kept the nation in restraint for some time; but at length a turbulent Pharisee rekindled the flame of insurrection, by publicly declaiming against the taxation as idolatrous, slavish, and incompatible with the dignity of a people who ought to acknowledge no sovereignty but that of the God of Abraham. The war which ensued upon the declamation of this incendiary was soon followed by a grievous famine, and the famine quickly introduced a pestilence, which swept away vast numbers in the midst of their contentions and hostilities. A. D. 6.

The Samaritans had not yet laid aside their enmity against the Jews, but eagerly embraced the first opportunity of involving them in distress. This malicious disposition induced them to enter the temple privately on the eve of the passover, for the purpose of strewing the galleries and other places of resort with human bones, so that the priests were compelled, next day, to put a stop to the solemnity; and this circumstance obliged them, for the future, to guard all the avenues against such insults. The ceremony was, however, soon resumed; and it was on this festival that the adorable Jesus, who had been taken to Egypt at the time of Herod's persecution, and afterwards secreted in Nazareth to avoid the jealousy or resentment of Archelaus, A. D. 12.

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came, in the twelfth year of his age, to the temple, and gave an early proof of his divine knowledge, by conversing with the Jewish doctors upon the most important and interesting points of their religion.

A. D. 15. On the death of Augustus, and the accession of Tyberius to the empire, Valerius Gratus was sent as procurator into Judea. This governor deposed the high-priest Annas in the fifteenth year of his pontificate, and transferred that dignity to Ishmael the son of Fabus; and, after two more changes, it was bestowed on Caiphas, son-in-law to the deposed Annas. Gratus himself was recalled soon afterwards, and succeeded by Pontius Pilate, a man who exceeded all his predecessors in cruelty, avarice, and injustice.

Antipas and Philip being permitted to keep possession of their toparchies, notwithstanding their brother's banishment, and having contrived to ingratiate themselves with the new emperor, prudently resolved to improve their respective territories: with this view, Antipas or Herod, who had the country of Galilee, rebuilt the city of Sephoris, and surrounded it with a strong wall and towers, so that it became the bulwark of that canton; and founded a new city on the northern banks of the lake Gennezareth, which he called Tiberias; while his brother Philip raised the village of Bethsaida, on the opposite shore, into a magnificent city, which he called Julian: he also changed the name of Paleas into Cæsarea.

A. D. 20. Judea, though frequently disturbed by tumults and commotions on account of the new tax, had not hitherto broken out

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into such an universal flame as began to rage soon after the arrival of Pilate. His predecessors had never attempted to bring the Roman standards into Jerusalem, because they were considered as the vilest abominations by the Jews, on account of their bearing the representations of men and other living creatures. But Pilate, disdaining to show them the same complaisance, ordered his troops, who were to winter in that city, to enter by night with their standards covered, and in the morning caused them to be displayed. This unusual sight threw all the citizens into consternation, and a great number of them hastened to Cæsarea, where Pilate resided, and earnestly petitioned that the standards might be removed to some other place; but he positively refused, on pretence, that such a procedure would be injurious to the emperor. The Jews persisted in their importunity, lying prostrate before his palace for the space of six days; when he came forth, ascended a tribunal, and ordered a body of troops to massacre all who should refuse to depart. The mournful supplicants, however, were so far from exhibiting any signs of terror at this sanguinary command, that they meekly offered their necks to the soldiers, and assured them, the loss of life was far greatly to be preferred to the violation of their laws. Such passive constancy in so turbulent a nation, appeared so surprising to the governor, that he immediately set them at liberty, and caused the offensive standards to be removed from their metropolis.

As, however, he seems to have delighted in the mortification of the Jewish nation, he soon contrived a pretext to rouse them more effectually, by drawing money from the sacred treasury;

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but while he levied the tax, he provided against the mutiny which he expected to ensue, by causing his troops to mix among the crowd with concealed clubs, and to be ready at the first signal to fall upon the mutineers. The circumstance happened precisely as he foresaw, and the insurrection was suppressed, according to his command, with the most outrageous cruelty.

A. D. 38. It was now the thirtieth jubilee since its first institution in the Land of Promise, when John,* the son of Zacharias, began to baptize his disciples in the Jordan, and Christ the Lord of Glory came to preach a more acceptable jubilee, not only to the inhabitants of Judea, but to the whole world. Having received the rite of baptism from the hands of his pious harbinger, the Holy Ghost visibly descended and lighted upon him in the form of a dove, whilst a voice was heard from Heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." The Baptist immediately embraced that opportunity of manifesting him to all the spectators, and of bearing this ample testimony, that he was the "Lamb of God, who should take † away the sin of the world."

The blessed Jesus having now commenced his public ministry, called some obscure and illiterate men to become his disciples, and gave them an

* John's extreme sanctity raised him to the esteem of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, who took much pleasure in his excellent counsel and discourse, till being severely reproved by an incestuous connexion, he caused him to be thrown into prison, and afterwards suffered him to be beheaded, at the request of a girl who had danced with peculiar grace on his (the tetrarch's) birth-day.

† A beautiful allusion to the expiatory sacrifices appointed by the Jewish ritual.

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incontrovertible proof of his divinity, by changing a considerable quantity of water into wine, at a marriage festival in Cana of Galilee. Upon his entering the temple at Jerusalem, he found it crowded with persons who sold cattle, poultry, and other things used in the Jewish offerings; together with a number of money-changers, who brought foreign coin instead of victims, and whose tables were an equal profanation to that holy place: against these, therefore, he exerted his sacred authority; and having severely reproved them for their impiety, compelled them to remove from their improper stations.

From this time, the co-equal son of God vouchsafed to travel about the country preaching the glad tidings of salvation, healing all manner of diseases, illustrating the laws of his heavenly father, raising up the dead, casting out devils, giving speech to the dumb, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and activity to the lame; till he, at length, voluntarily submitted to the ignominious death of the cross, and meekly endured the heavy chastisement of Divine Justice, for the ransom of a rebellious, but beloved world. Numerous and deeply impressive were the singular events of that day, in which, "he was numbered with the transgressors." The sun retired behind the darkest cloud, while its Creator hung suspended on the fatal tree; the earth trembled beneath the oppressive load of concentered crimes, which could only be expiated by his precious blood; and the beauteous canopy of heaven was overspread with blackness, while his dying lips implored forgiveness for his murderers. Having at length endured the *extremity* of torture, and made a *complete* atonement for the sins of his

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fallen creatures, he exclaimed, with a loud voice, "It is finished!" and gave up the ghost, while the veil of the temple miraculously divided, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and many other prodigies occurred to bear witness to the divinity of the sufferer, and to announce to distant lands the redemption of mankind.

A. D. 33. His disciples, whose faith had proved unequal to the severe trial of beholding their *king* expire on the cross, were, on the third day, transported with joy at the happy news of his resurrection. He graciously vouchsafed to give them frequent demonstrations of that important fact; and having encouraged them, by his presence and counsel, to undertake the arduous task of propagating the christian religion among idolatrous Gentiles and more hardened Jews, he commissioned them to go into all nations for that glorious purpose, and promised he would be with them to the end of the world. He then led them forth to the mount of Olives, and in their full view, ascended up into heaven, leaving his blessing upon them, and the comfortable assurance that he was going to prepare a place for them in his kingdom.

When fifty days from Christ's resurrection were expired, and all the disciples were assembled in a large upper room at Jerusalem, suddenly there was heard a mighty sound from heaven; a vehement wind filled the apartment, and there appeared cloven tongues of fire sitting upon their heads, in consequence of which they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, inspired with the knowledge of foreign tongues, and endowed with all supernatural gifts, to qualify them for their ministerial functions.

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The report of this extraordinary occurrence drew together a great concourse of people, who had come from all the surrounding nations to keep the solemnity of Pentecost; and were astonished beyond measure, at hearing a company of illiterate Galileans express with such energy the most sublime mysteries of the gospel. Whilst some were questioning what the issue of this prodigy would be, others ascribed their raptures to an excess of new wine which they supposed them to have drank that morning. But Peter having exploded this supposition, by observing, it was but the third hour, or nine of the morning, proved clearly from the scriptures that there was nothing in this event, but what had been plainly predicted by one of the prophets. From that subject he proceeded to the other oracles which had presignified the sufferings and resurrection of the true Messiah; all of which he explained with such irresistible force, that three thousand persons were immediately convinced by his arguments, and voluntarily embraced the faith of Christ.

At the hour of evening prayer, Peter and John went up to the temple and healed a poor cripple who sat begging at the gate. This incident drew a great concourse of people about them, and Peter embraced the favourable opportunity of preaching his master's divine doctrines, which he did in so eloquent a manner, that five thousand more were added to the number of their converts.

These important occurrences contributed to awaken the fears of the Jewish rulers, who caused the apostles and the cripple to be brought before them. Peter, with his accustomed boldness, demonstrated to them by the word of God, that Jesus



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of Nazareth, whom they had recently condemned to death, was that chief corner-stone, long since foretold to be rejected by the builders, but now become the foundation of the new covenant, since there was no other name under heaven by which men might be saved but that of Jesus Christ. The sanhedrim deeming it imprudent to inflame the admiring multitude by using severity, contented themselves for the present with commanding them not to teach any more in that name, and thus dismissed them.

This injunction proving totally ineffectual, and the new religion spreading rapidly among the people, the sanhedrim resolved to try the effect of punishment, and accordingly ordered the apostles to be again seized and thrown into prison; but before the next morning, an angel had opened the prison gates, and sent them back to resume their ministry: so that when the council assembled to try them, word was brought that they had been miraculously liberated, and were at that time preaching the doctrine of Christ's resurrection in the temple. Being again apprehended and sharply interrogated respecting their disobedience, they gave such an answer as showed they were not to be terrified into a base submission, and by this means inflamed the council to such a degree, that they were just ready to vent their resentment in some cruel determination, when Gamaliel, one of their most learned members, moderated their indignation by observing, that if the doctrines of those men were fallacious, they would surely be confounded; but if, on the contrary, they acted from an impulse of the Most High, it would be equally vain and impious to oppose them. In consequence of this well-timed

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remark, the apostles were again dismissed without punishment.

The death of the protomartyr Stephen, which happened soon after, was followed by a fierce persecution against the christian church, yet that persecution was turned into the means of propagating the gospel by the dispersion of the true believers. A. D. 34.

About the commencement of the next year, L. Vitellius, proconsul of Syria, visited Jerusalem, and expressed much kindness towards the Jews, by remitting certain duties, transferring the care of the pontifical habits from a Roman officer to the Jewish high-priest, and raising Jonathan, the son of Annas, to the pontifical chair.

Soon after this transaction, an impostor persuaded the Samaritans, that if they would follow him to Mount Garizzim, he would show them the sacred vessels which had been formerly buried by Moses in that place. The credulous people immediately assembled before the village Tirathaba, and formed an encampment for the purpose of waiting till they were joined by a sufficient force, to enable them to secure the pretended treasure. But Pilate having notice of their design, sent a strong party of horse and foot soldiers, who attacked them with such resistless fury, that many of them were killed, and others taken prisoners, while the smallest division saved themselves by a precipitate flight. The Samaritans applied, in this emergency, to Vitellius, complaining of the inhuman massacre, and assuring him they had no seditious view in assembling in arms, but that they merely wished to secure themselves from the oppressions of the Jewish governor. Vitellius immediately dis-

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patched his friend Marcellus to assume the government of Judea, and sent orders to Pilate to repair to Rome, that he might answer the accusations of the injured Samaritans before the imperial tribunal.

During these transactions in Judea, Herod had been waging an unsuccessful war with Aretas; and Tiberius, highly incensed at the good fortune of the latter, had commanded Vitellius to invade his country, and either take him prisoner or send his head to Rome. Vitellius designed to have marched through Judea in his way to Arabia, but some of the Jewish magistrates prevailed on him to relinquish his intention. Having acceded to their request, he and Herod came to Jerusalem, where they offered the usual sacrifices, and transferred the pontifical dignity from Jonathan to his brother Theophilus. Here they received intelligence of the emperor's death, and Vitellius staid to receive the oath of fidelity from the people to Caius, the successor of Tiberius. Aretas was also now succeeded by Artabanes, with whom Vitellius entered into an alliance near the Euphrates, where Herod entertained them in the most sumptuous manner beneath a pavilion which he had caused to be reared for that purpose.

Soon after the decease of Tiberius, Marcellus, to whom the care of Judea was committed on Pilate's deposition, was made governor, and Agrippa, grand-son of Herod the Great, who had been thrown into prison and loaded with chains by order of the emperor, was invested with the tetrarchy of his deceased uncle Philip, and that of Abylene in Syria, together with the title of king. Having obtained per-

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mission to visit his Jewish territories, he took Egypt in his way, and soon came within sight of Alexandria; but on receiving some insults from the envious inhabitants of that city, and perceiving that Flaccus, their governor, privately encouraged the offenders, he resolved to quit the place as soon as possible.

He had no sooner established himself in his new kingdom than he sent an account to the emperor of various cruelties committed by Flaccus against the Jewish nation. In consequence of which that sanguinary governor was stripped of his authority and riches, banished into an island of the Archipelago, and at length condemned to suffer death.

Herod Antipas, who could not behold Agrippa's glory without envy, was easily persuaded by his wife, a woman of an ambitious and enterprising spirit, to take a journey to Rome, in order to obtain the regal dignity from the emperor, but Agrippa, having timely notice of the design, sent thither one of his freed-men to accuse Herod of having been concerned in a recent conspiracy, and to mention as a proof of it, the arsenals which he had filled with arms sufficient to furnish seventy thousand men. Herod was accordingly deposed from his tetrarchy, and banished to Lyons in France, whither he was accompanied by Herodias, notwithstanding some friendly offers on the part of Caius to give her a free pardon, and to procure her the payment of several sums she had lent her brother Agrippa.

Claudius, in consideration of Agrippa's friendly exertions, previous to his accession, indulged that monarch with some important privileges, entered into a solemn alliance with him, and



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made several edicts highly beneficial to the Jewish nation. Agrippa had the honours of the consulship, and his brother Herod those of the prætorship conferred upon them; both were entitled to enter the senate, and to pay their compliments to the emperor in Greek, a ceremony which was usually performed in the Latin tongue, and all these grants were set up in full view in the capitol.

On Agrippa's return from Rome, he exhibited a more jealous attachment to his national religion than had been expressed by any of his predecessors. He caused the golden chain which Caius had given him at his liberation from prison, to be hung up in the temple as a monument of the instability of human affairs; transferred the high-priesthood from Theophilus to Matthias; and lavished an immense treasure in beautifying a new quarter on the north side of the city, which he called Bozetha. His disposition was naturally amiable, and he appeared to delight in acts of clemency and munificence; but his intemperate zeal betrayed him into some dreadful errors, and induced him to commence a violent persecution against the church of Christ. James the less, surnamed Boanerges, was beheaded by his command, and Peter was thrown into prison, in order to share a similar fate, but on the very night before his intended martyrdom, whilst he was sleeping in his dungeon, and guarded by four quaternions of soldiers, an angel freed him from his fetters, opened the doors of the prison, and, awakening him hastily, led him safely through the streets of the city, till he found an asylum with some other disciples, who were at that juncture offering up their prayers to heaven for his deliverance.

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Soon after this event, Agrippa returned to Cæsarea, where he designed to exhibit some public games in honour of the emperor Claudius. He appeared early on the second morning of the festival at the public theatre, in a rich suit artfully wrought, so that the sun-beams, playing on the silver ground of it, were reflected with such uncommon lustre, as filled the wondering spectators with a kind of adoration. He then addressed himself in an elegant speech to the deputies of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to implore his pardon for some recent offences, upon which they exclaimed, with a great shout, that it was the voice of a god, and not of a man. Agrippa, instead of reproving, encouraged the impious adulation, and the angel of God immediately smote him with a dreadful disease, under which he lingered five days, and then expired in the most acute agonies, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign.

Claudius intended to bestow the kingdom on Agrippa's son, according to a former promise, but as that prince was deemed inadequate to the care of such a nation, on account of his youth, Judea was again converted into a province of the empire, and Caspius Fadus was nominated to the government. About this time a famine, predicted by a Christian prophet, began to rage, when the new churches planted at Antioch and other places, sent a liberal supply to the believers at Jerusalem.

Fadus, upon his arrival in Judea, found it necessary to quell an insurrection which the Jews had raised against the inhabitants of Philadelphia, and also to suppress the banditti, who by

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that time were greatly augmented both in strength and number. Cassius Longinus, being in the mean time made governor of Jerusalem, insisted upon having the pontifical vestments put into his possession, that they might be kept, as formerly, in the fortress of Antonia, but in consequence of a deputation to Rome, this demand was set aside. Herod, king of Chalcis, obtained at the same time, the superintendency of the temple and sacred treasury, together with the authority of electing whom he would to the high-priesthood.

During Fadus's government, there arose an impostor in Judea, called Theudas, who formed a powerful party, by pretending that he would divide the waters of the river Jordan, as Joshua had done, by his single word. The deluded multitude were however soon dispersed by some of the Roman troops, and Theudas himself was condemned to lose his head.

Fadus was soon after succeeded in the government by an apostate Jew of sacerdotal race, called Tiberius Alexander. He caused James and Simon, the sons of Judas Galilæus, head of the Gaulonitish sect, to be crucified. About the same time Herod, king of Chalcis, died, and was succeeded by young Agrippa, whom Claudius raised to the throne in preference to his elder brother Aristobulus.

Ventidius Cumanus was next sent governor of Judea, but his tyrannical conduct occasioned such disorder, that he incurred the displeasure of the emperor, and was compelled to resign his authority to Claudius Felix, under whom the Jewish affairs became worse than ever. The country was entirely overrun with banditti, and

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false prophets were continually blowing the flames of sedition, while the sicarii or assassins committed the most atrocious deeds, under the specious mask of zeal for their religion and liberties. Frequent executions were, consequently, necessary, but Felix exerted his cruelty on all persons indiscriminately, whom his avarice or resentment had marked out for destruction, whether innocent or guilty. This inhumanity occasioned the venerable priest Jonathan, who had been instrumental in procuring Felix the government, to expostulate with him upon the harshness and impolicy of his conduct; but the ungrateful Roman persisted in his tyranny, and ordered his friendly censor to be privately murdered.

He was succeeded by Portius Festus, who, on his arrival, found the affairs of the province in a most lamentable situation, and perceived, to his astonishment, that even the priests had commenced a civil war among themselves, in consequence of the frequent depositions of the pontiffs, and their pretensions to a more considerable share of the tythes than their brethren could afford. Festus was therefore necessitated to begin his government with the utmost severity, in order to suppress the disorders which now filled the city, the country, and sometimes the temple with blood.

A. D. 62. Towards the close of this year Festus died, and was succeeded by Albinus, who, on his arrival, expressed his resentment against Ananus the high-priest, for the unlawful execution of St. James, bishop of Jerusalem, in such severe terms, that Agrippa thought fit to depose the offender. He then punished with unrelenting severity the sicarii, robbers, and banditti, who were now grown more numerous than

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ever, while the scandalous outrages of the rival priests called aloud for reformation.

A. D. 64. Albinus, after a two years government, was recalled by Nero; and Gessius Florus was nominated to succeed him. This abandoned wretch, whose chief delight consisted in rapine, murder, and oppression, openly connived at the nefarious practices of the banditti, and used his utmost exertions to provoke the nation to open rebellion, that he might enjoy the diabolical satisfaction of seeing them massacre each other, whilst the general confusion would prevent those complaints which might otherwise be made against his unparalleled tyranny.

In consequence of these base proceedings, and the distracted state of the country, great numbers of Jews resolved to seek an asylum with foreign nations, whilst those who staid behind applied to Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, who was then at the passover, beseeching him to have compassion on their extreme misery, and deliver them from the oppressive violence of their tyrannical governor. Florus, who was present, insolently turned the complaint into ridicule; and Cestius contented himself with telling them, that Florus should behave better in future. In the mean time, directions were given for computing the number of Jews that were in Jerusalem, by that of the lambs sacrificed at the festival, and the whole was found to amount to two millions, five hundred and fifty-six thousand.

A. D. 69. Soon after this computation had been transmitted to Nero, the contest between the Jews and Syrians, respecting the city of Cæsarea, was decided in favour of the latter.

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The decree was no sooner published in Judea, than the Jews of all descriptions resolved to take up arms; and thus began the fatal war which terminated in the destruction of their nation. Agrippa, who was in the metropolis at the beginning of this rebellion, strove to appease the people by a long and elaborate speech, but instead of effecting his design, he was saluted with a volley of stones, and compelled to quit the city, while Florus refused to make the least exertion for the restoration of peace, and secretly triumphed in the horrid accomplishment of his desire. The flames of intestine war now began to rage with irresistible fury in every part of the unhappy province. Nothing was to be seen but carnage, robbery, and dilapidation; nothing to be heard but execrations, groans, or unavailing complaints. Twenty thousand Jews were massacred in Cæsarea; two thousand at Ptolemais; and fifty thousand in Alexandria. At Jerusalem three thousand five hundred persons were slaughtered in one day by the troops of Florus, and those who were taken prisoners were inhumanly scourged and then crucified; while the Jews, on their part, spared neither Syrians nor Romans, but retaliated their cruelties wherever they prevailed.

Berenice, who had remained at Jerusalem some time after her brother Agrippa's departure, spared neither entreaties, messages nor visits, to prevail on the brutal prætor to put a stop to the general effusion of blood, but the inhuman tyrant remained obdurate, and she was repeatedly exposed to the utmost peril in the prosecution of her laudable attempts.

A great number of assassins having, in the mean time, joined the rebels, they compelled the

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Roman troops to evacuate the fortresses of Massada and Antonia; possessed themselves of the towers of Phasael and Mariamne; reduced the palaces of Agrippa, Berenice, and the high-priest to ashes; and murdered all who presumed to oppose them, without pity or distinction. Menahem, chief of the sicarii or zealots, was murdered by the insurgents, with a great number of his followers; but his nephew Eleazar immediately succeeded him, and besieged the Romans so closely in their castle, that they were obliged to surrender and were all massacred, notwithstanding the besiegers had given a solemn promise they should retire without molestation; a treachery which was soon after retaliated on the Jews of Scythopolis.

The rebels had by this time extended their conquests beyond the Jordan, and reduced the fortresses of Cyprus and Machaeron; so that Cestius Gallus, who had hitherto been an idle spectator of the increasing ruin, began to take some vigorous measures for the suppression of the revolt. He accordingly marched, at the head of a powerful army, into Judea, massacred all the Jews he could find, and burnt all the towns and villages in his route till he approached Gibeon, where he formed an encampment. The people at Jerusalem, who were then celebrating the feast of tabernacles, armed themselves at the news of his approach, and came out against him with such unbridled fury, that he would in all likelihood have been defeated, had not he received a timely succour from his cavalry. Agrippa now hastened to join the Roman with a body of troops, and endeavoured once more to appease the rebellious Jews, by sending two of his offi-

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cers to them with some proposals for peace; but instead of hearkening to his terms, they killed one of the messengers and attacked the other so fiercely, that it was with extreme difficulty he escaped with his life. To revenge this outrage, Cestius advanced suddenly towards them, and drove them before him almost to Jerusalem. Having staid three days at Scopas, in the hope of terrifying them by the contiguity of his army to their metropolis, he marched against them in order of battle, and threw them into such consternation, that they hastily abandoned the outer parts of the city, and sought an asylum in the inner cincture near the temple.

Had Cestius persisted in his design of besieging them, with unremitting vigour and resolution, he might, in all probability, have finally crushed the rebellion; but the siege was suddenly raised at the instigation of Cestius's generals, who had been corrupted by Florus; and the insurgents being re-animated by this impolitic action, boldly sallied out, and in their turn pursued him to his camp at Gibeon, from whence he contrived to escape by night, after losing four thousand foot and four hundred horse, with a considerable part of the baggage.

The Jews having thus vanquished the Syrian governor, deliberated on the most prudent means of carrying on the war against the Romans, and appointing certain chiefs to command in the several cantons and fortresses of Judea. After some debates it was agreed that Josephus, a Jewish priest of considerable rank, should be appointed governor of the two Galilees: that the care of the metropolis should be left to Ananus the high-priest, and Joseph the son of Go-



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rion; and that Eleazar, the chief of the zealots, should be intrusted with the government of Idumea.

Nero, who in the mean time had received intelligence of these preparations, together with the signal defeat of Cestius, commanded Vespasian to march with all possible expedition against Judea. He repaired, accordingly, to Syria, and assembled all his forces, with those of his auxiliaries, whilst his son Titus was sent to fetch the fifth and tenth legions from Alexandria.

Early in the following spring the Roman general advanced, with Agrippa, towards Ptolemais, and was there joined by Titus with a body of troops, who had boldly marched to his assistance amidst the trying severities of winter. Their combined forces now amounted to sixty thousand disciplined men, with which they entered Galilee, burnt Gadara, and advanced to besiege Jotapa. Upon the first news of their approach, Josephus, governor of that province, supplied the place with stores, and defended it in the most heroic manner for the space of forty days, but at the expiration of that time it was taken by assault; the garrison were put to the sword, and not a single inhabitant escaped to relate the dreadful misfortune, as they were all massacred or taken prisoners. Forty thousand persons are said to have perished at this time, and Josephus was among the number of those who exchanged the horrors of war for captivity. He had concealed himself in a subterraneous cavern, but was at length discovered, and prevailed upon by Vespasian's generous offers to surrender.

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Whilst Vespasian was engaged at Jotapa, Trajan had been sent to invest Japha, which he reduced, but gave young Titus the honour of it, by complimenting him with the direction of the last assault. Upon their entering the place, the Japhians resisted with the most surprising obstinacy, and maintained a sanguinary engagement during six hours, in their streets; they were, however, at length overpowered and put to the sword, and all the women and children were carried away prisoners. The Samaritans, who had assembled on Mount Garizzim, were driven to such extremities for want of water, that many of them perished with thirst, and those who refused to surrender were literally cut in pieces. Joppa, which had been formerly laid waste by Cestius, but now re-peopled with seditious Jews, was taken by the Roman forces, while four thousand of the new inhabitants, endeavouring to elude the sword by betaking themselves to their ships, were driven back by a sudden tempest, and either drowned or thrown into the power of the enemy. Tiberias and Tarichea were also reduced after a vigorous defence, and all the rebels who occupied the latter were condemned to die.

On the reduction of these important places the Galileans, perceiving the impossibility of subduing so powerful an enemy, prudently delivered up all their remaining cities, except Gamala, Gischala, and the mountain of Itabyr. The former of these was invested by Agrippa, who exerted his eloquence to induce the inhabitants to surrender before they were driven to extremity, but the only answer he received was a volley of stones from the engines, by which he was wounded in

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the arm. The Romans, who had now come to his assistance, were violently exasperated at this outrage, and made so desperate an assault that they actually got possession of the town, but were compelled to abandon it with considerable loss. The assault was then renewed with still greater fury, and the besieged fought with the utmost desperation, insomuch, that the Roman courage was put to a severe trial; but at length, one of the towers being overthrown, the incensed army rushed in at the breach, and made a horrid slaughter of their obstinate opponents. Four thousand miserable wretches were slain by the avenging sword, and a much greater number fell victims to their own impatience and ungovernable fury. During this siege Placidus contrived to draw the Jews of Itabyr down into the plain by a pretended flight, and then, suddenly facing about, defeated them with a great slaughter, and took possession of the mountain.

Titus was now sent to form the siege of Gischala, but as he was much grieved at the prodigious effusion of blood which attended the successive conquests, he earnestly exhorted the inhabitants to secure themselves from destruction by a timely surrender. The citizens were willing to follow his advice, but a seditious Jew, named John, forcibly opposed it, and, having the mob at his command, overawed the whole city. This perfidious wretch entreated Titus to grant one day's truce, promising that he would, upon that condition, embrace his proposal on the morrow; but he had no sooner obtained his request than he fled with all possible celerity to Jerusalem, and left the citizens to dispose of their liberty as they thought proper. These im-

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mediately surrendered to the young general, and told him of John's flight, earnestly entreating that he would not punish the innocent with the guilty. Titus generously granted their petition, and contented himself with sending a body of cavalry in pursuit of the fugitives. The surrender of this place having completed the conquest of Galilee, Titus rejoined his father at Cæsarea, where the troops were permitted to enjoy some necessary refreshments and repose, previous to their commencing the siege of the Jewish metropolis.

A. D. 70. While those members of the Jewish nation who clearly foresaw the impending destruction which threatened their country, their religion, and even their existence, were prudently solicitous to elude the danger by a timely submission to the Romans, the opposite party, which was by far the more numerous, and consisted of men of the vilest character that ever disgraced human nature, opposed all pacific measures with invincible obstinacy, and breathed out nothing but slaughter, rapine, and devastation. These abandoned wretches, who, under pretence of religion, acted rather like demoniacs than beings who had any sense of humanity, began to exercise their wanton cruelty in plundering and assassinating all who presumed to oppose them in the vicinage of Jerusalem; and then proceeded into the capital with Zechariah and Eleazar at their head. Here they met with a strenuous opposition, as Ananus, the late high-priest, exhorted the citizens to arm in their own defence, and boldly repulse those factious villains who had seized upon the temple, and made it their garrison, from which they occasionally sal-



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lied out to commit the most shocking outrages. The people adopted this advice, and made so vigorous an attack upon the Zealots, that they were compelled to retreat into the inner cincture of the temple, and were there closely besieged by Ananus. John of Gischala, under pretence of espousing the pontiff's cause, was intrusted with some proposals of peace for the besieged; but, instead of executing his commission with fidelity, he persuaded them to hold out with unshaken firmness, and concerted a plan by which they might procure the assistance of the Idumeans.

On the same night there happened so dreadful a storm, accompanied with thunder, lightning, and a violent earthquake, that the Zealots sawed the bolts and hinges of the temple-gates without being heard, sallied into the city, and admitted the Idumean auxiliaries, who had come upon their invitation, to the number of twenty thousand.—These parties, thus strengthened and united, immediately began to perpetrate the most horrid cruelties on the opposite side. Twelve thousand individuals of noble extraction, and in the flower of their age, were murdered by the most cruel methods, and the tyranny of their assassins increased to such a height, that the whole nation trembled at their name.

When they had satiated their unrestrained cruelty with the blood of so many persons of distinction, they turned their sanguinary hands against the lower class, and literally filled Jerusalem with anguish and distress. To have once seemed to oppose them was a crime that must be expiated by the death of the offender; to be inactive was to be pronounced a spy, and not to

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applaud their most nefarious practices was immediately construed into disaffection: none dared be seen to weep or heard to lament the murder of their nearest relations, nor even to give them the last melancholy service of interment. This despotism compelled many of the Jews to take shelter under the Romans, though the avenues of the city were so strictly guarded that the attempt was extremely hazardous, and all who were detected in it were immediately put to death.

Vespasian, in the mean time, remained at Cæsarea, an idle spectator of the melancholy state of the revolted province, aware that the Jewish strength declined daily in consequence of their intestine broils and massacres, whilst his own men enjoyed an interval of repose which would enable them to force the enemy to submission. The event justified his unusual indolence, and fully accomplished the awful predictions which had been frequently pronounced against the rebellious nation.

The Zealots, after triumphing over the lives and property of their opponents, began to turn their murderous weapons against each other. John of Gischala, impatient of control, and ambitious of absolute authority, drew the most profligate of the Zealots to espouse his cause; while the other chiefs forced an opposite faction, and opposed him with the most rancorous malignity. Whilst this anarchy prevailed in the wretched city, a new body of sicarii appeared in the country, under the conduct of a bold ambitious young man, called Simon, who, in order to augment his followers, caused a proclamation to be made, promising liberty to all slaves, and suitable en-

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couragements to all freemen who should voluntarily enlist under his banners. By this expedient his party was soon increased to a powerful army, and himself respected as a monarch; many Jews of distinction, besides those of the lower class, putting themselves beneath his protection, to elude the barbarity of the opposite party.

A. D. 71. About this time Nero terminated his tyrannical reign with an act of suicide; and Vespasian was busily employed in making preparations for the siege of Jerusalem; whilst Simon invaded Idumea with an army of twenty thousand men, and perpetrated such acts of cruelty and devastation, that the miserable wretches who escaped with their lives, abandoned the country to his mercy, and went to take shelter in the metropolis.

John, who had hitherto tyrannized with extraordinary success at the head of his banditti, was now opposed by the Idumeans, and driven into the temple, whilst Simon had advanced in pursuit of the Idumean fugitives to the very walls of the city. In this emergency the people formed the rash design of admitting Simon and his troops to overawe the besieged chief, who was expected to sally out in the night, and effect some horrid purpose. Simon was accordingly received with great honours and acclamations, but as his chief care was to render his power absolute, he looked indifferently on those who invited, and those against whom he was desired to turn in arms. He had already discarded every virtue from his bosom; and therefore ingratitude and breach of faith were crimes of too light a nature to restrain his ungovernable avarice and cruelty.

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The Romans had not remained inactive during these convulsions in the city; but being invited by the inhabitants of Gadara, one of the strongest places on that side the river, had sent Placidus to take possession of it. He accordingly fought his way thither through several strong bodies of the rebels, and exerted himself so effectually, that, in a short space of time, all that part of Judea which lies on the east side the Jordan was completely reduced, except the castle of Machæron. Vespasian, in the beginning of the spring, marched against Idumea, and reduced all the towns and villages to ashes, except such as he supposed might prove serviceable to the troops whom he left to overawe the country.

Some months having elapsed since Vespasian received intelligence of Nero's death, and the election of Galba to the imperial dignity, that general sent Titus to compliment the new emperor, and to receive his commands concerning the reduction of Judea. Titus immediately prepared to execute his commission, and Agrippa resolved on accompanying him, but they had proceeded no farther than Achaia, when they heard the news of Galba's assassination, and the accession of Otho. Titus immediately hastened back to his father, who was soon after chosen emperor, according to the prediction of Josephus, whom he now set at liberty, and recompensed with many signal favours.

The Jewish dissensions still increased, and involved the threatened city in new and accumulated calamities. Eleazar, a person of the sacerdotal order, and of great courage, contrived to form a new party, by persuading the adhe-

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rents of John of Gischala that their chief was become insupportably tyrannical. With this new faction he seized on the court of the priests, and confined John in that of the Israelites. The avenues were so carefully guarded, that no persons were admitted to that part of the temple but those who came to offer sacrifice; and it was by these offerings that he maintained himself and his partisans. John finding himself so completely hemmed in by Eleazar above, and Simon, who had possession of the city, below, defended himself against the former with his engines, out of which he continued throwing stones into his court; and when he sallied out against the latter, he set fire to every building he could reach, and by that means destroyed great quantities of provisions, which might otherwise have enabled the inhabitants to hold out against the besiegers for several years.

Such was the deplorable condition of Jerusalem, when Titus, being left by his father to terminate the war, and having received some powerful reinforcements from his friends, marched against that city. Previous to his forming a regular siege, he went in person with a body of six hundred horse to reconnoitre its strength and avenues; and seemed to flatter himself that the Jews would readily open their gates to him; but they made so vigorous and unexpected a sally against him, that he found himself surrounded in a narrow defile, and escaped with extreme difficulty from the vengeance of his assailants. This accident induced him to draw his army nearer, in order to commence the siege in form.

Eleazar's party was now extirpated by the im-

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pious artifice of John of Gischala, but the other two persevered in their usual cruelties against each other with such desperation, that it appeared as if they had taken an oath to facilitate the reduction of their city by the Roman arms. Titus in the mean time had caused his troops to level all the ground in their approach to the walls, and to make every preparation for a powerful attack. Some proposals of peace were sent to the besieged, but they were rejected with indignation; and the Romans were, consequently, ordered to play their engines against the city with all their might. The Jews were soon compelled to retire from those dreadful stones which the enemy threw incessantly from their towers; and the battering-rams were at full liberty to play against the wall. A breach was soon made, and the entrance of the Romans compelled the rebels to retire behind the enclosure. This lodgment was effected about a fortnight after the beginning of the siege.

Titus immediately advanced to the second wall, and plied his engines and battering-rams so furiously, that one of the towers began to shake, and the Jews who occupied it, perceiving their impending ruin, set it on fire, and precipitated themselves into the flames. The fall of this structure afforded an entrance to the second enclosure; but as Titus was anxious to preserve the city from demolition, the breach and lanes were left so narrow, that a great number of his men perished for want of room, when they were attacked by Simon. This oversight was, however, quickly rectified, and the place was carried four days after the first repulse.

A raging famine, which had for some time

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afflicted the city, was now followed by a pestilence; and as these calamities increased, so did the cruelty of the factions, who forced the houses in quest of provisions, punishing those with death who had any, because they had not, apprised them of it; and putting others to the most exquisite tortures under the pretence that they had victuals concealed.

Titus having again attempted in vain to prevail on them to surrender, by distributing provisions to his army in their sight; and by sending Josephus to represent the fatal consequences of their obstinacy, caused the city to be surrounded with a strong wall to prevent their receiving any kind of succour, or their eluding his vengeance by flight. Nothing was now to be seen in the streets of Jerusalem but putrescent bodies, emaciated invalids, and objects of the deepest distress; and even those who escaped safe to the Roman camp, were murdered by the soldiers, upon a supposition that they had swallowed great quantities of gold; insomuch that two thousand of them were ripped up in one night.

The inhumanity of the faction within, made the agonies and dying groans of their brethren the subject of their diabolical mirth, and exercised upon the lifeless bodies every species of wanton barbarity; whilst the wretched inhabitants were encouraged to persist in their obstinacy by a number of impostors, who took upon themselves the names of prophets, and promised a miraculous deliverance from the present calamities. At this melancholy juncture, an unhappy mother was reduced to the horrid extremity of killing and eating her own child.

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The Roman general, hearing of this inhuman deed, immediately swore to extirpate both city and people, at the same time taking heaven to witness that he was innocent of the incomparable sufferings which that obstinate and infatuated nation had brought upon themselves.

About the end of July, the Romans made themselves masters of fort Antonio, and set fire to the gates, after a sanguinary encounter: yet so blind were the Jews to their real danger, that though nothing was left but the Temple, and the Romans were preparing implements to batter down that edifice as the last obstacle to their victory, they could not persuade themselves that God would permit his holy habitation to be taken by the heathen; but still expected some wonderful deliverance.

On the seventeenth day of the month the daily sacrifice ceased for the first time since its restoration by Judas Maccabeus, there being no proper person left in the temple to make the offering. The gallery that afforded a communication between the temple and fort Antonio was now burnt down, and on the twenty-seventh of the month the Jews, having filled the western portico with combustibles, induced the Romans, by a feigned flight, to scale the battlements and set fire to the building; so that the troops were either consumed in the flames, or dashed to pieces by leaping from the roof.

Next day Titus obtained admission into the outer court of the temple, and drove the besieged into that of the priests. Having attempted to batter down one of the galleries of the precinct without success, he caused the gates to be set on fire; they continued to burn all night, while the



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silver with which they were plated dropped down as it melted, and the flames communicated rapidly to the porticos and galleries in sight of the besieged, who, instead of attempting to stop it, contented themselves with uttering impotent curses against the sacrilegious Romans. Titus, being extremely desirous of preserving that noble edifice from destruction, caused the fire to be extinguished; but whilst he was reposing in his pavilion, one of the soldiers took up a lighted fire-brand, and mounting on his comrade's shoulders, threw it into one of the apartments adjoining to the sanctuary; the whole north side was immediately in a flame up to the third story, and Titus, awakened by the noise, ran to have it extinguished, but his endeavours were in vain, and the soldiers were so firmly bent upon destroying all that was left, that his orders, threats, and entreaties, were equally disregarded. When he found himself unable to effect his design, he entered the sanctuary, and the most holy place, where he found the golden candlestick, the table of shew bread, the golden altar of perfumes, and the book of the law wrapped up in a rich gold tissue. Upon his quitting that sacred place, some other soldiers set it on fire, after carrying off the costly robes and utensils, and tearing the gold plating from the gates and timber-work.

A dreadful slaughter now ensued, in which many thousands perished, some by the sword, some by the flame, and others by falling from the battlements. The conquerors carried their fury to such a height as to massacre all whom they met, without distinction of age, sex, or quality, and to burn all the treasure-houses,

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though they were full of the richest furniture, vestments, plate, and other valuables. In short, they persisted in their dreadful work till the whole of the holy building was utterly demolished, except two of the gates of that part of the court which was destined for the women.

A. D. 73. Great preparations were made, in the mean time, for attacking the upper city, and the royal palace; and on the eighth of September the engines played so furiously on the iniquitous zealots, that they were overwhelmed with confusion, and ran like lunaties towards Shiloah, intending to attack the wall of circumvallation, and by that means effect their escape; but being repulsed by the enemy, they were compelled to hide themselves in the public sinks and common sewers, while all the other inhabitants were put to the sword, except some of the most vigorous, who were reserved for the victor's triumph. The number of slain and prisoners in the course of this fatal war with Rome, amounts to one million, four hundred and sixty-two thousand, of whom ninety-seven thousand were doomed to be exposed in public, to fight like gladiators, or to be devoured by wild beasts, and eleven thousand perished for want, either through the neglect of their keepers, or their own sullen despair; and what tends to aggravate the calamity is, that the greatest part of them were strangers invited from foreign countries, even from beyond the Euphrates, to assist their brethren at Judea, in defence of their laws and religious liberties.

Whilst the soldiers were employed in burning the poor remains of the city, and massacreing such unhappy creatures as fell into their hands, John and Simon, the two grand rebels, were dis-

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covered and brought to Titus, who ordered them to be reserved for his triumph.

When the sword had returned to its scabbard for want of other objects whereon to exercise its fury, and the troops were satisfied with plunder, Titus gave orders for the total demolition of the remaining part of the city, with its fortifications, palaces, towers, and sumptuous edifices, excepting a part of the western wall, and the three towers of Hipprus, Phasael, and Mariamne, which might prove to future ages the astonishing strength of the city, and the valour of its conqueror.

The castles of Herodion, Massada, and Machaeron, were left untaken by Titus, but two of them, viz. Herodion and Machaeron, were, soon afterwards, reduced by Lucilius Bassus; and that of Massada was attacked with such resolution by Flavius Silva, that Eleazar, the commander of the Sicarii, persuaded the inhabitants, in a kind of despair, to kill all their wives and children; next to choose ten men by lot, who should slaughter all the rest; and lastly, pitch upon one out of the ten to kill them and himself. This horrid tragedy was accordingly acted; and the Romans, preparing the next morning to scale the walls, received information of the particulars from two females, who had eluded the massacre, by concealing themselves in an aqueduct.

The war being now completely terminated, Vespasian ordered all the Jewish lands to be sold for his own use; commanded all the Jews within his empire to pay the tribute of half a shekel into the imperial treasury, which they had formerly paid for the use of the sanctuary; and caused all the branches of the house of Judah to be cut off, to obviate their vain hopes of a *future* Messiah.

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## THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.

THE most ancient of the four great empires was that of Assyria, the name of which country was derived from Ashur, the first settler of it after the flood. Assyria proper was bounded on the north by Armenia; on the west by the Tigris; on the south by Susiana; and on the east by Media. The internal division of it has been accurately described by Ptolemy, but we shall only mention its principal province Adiaben, because this was so considerable as sometimes to give its name to the whole country. Here also stood the famous city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire.

The kingdom of Assyria, as founded by Ashur, was widely different from the magnificent monarchy which many ages afterwards bore that name; but of its early history we have very imperfect accounts. The Assyrian chronology is exceedingly perplexed, and the only certain light we have respecting the Assyrian history, is in the sacred writings.

What Ctesias has related in his Assyrian history, though adopted as genuine by many learned writers, is so contradictory to the scripture, and so highly romantic, as to deserve no credit. He represents Ninus, the founder of this empire, as a prince of the most extraordinary endowments and prowess; but the account which he gives of Semiramis, the wife of that monarch, is totally incredible. Ninus, after conquering almost all Asia, between Tanais and the Nile, built the city



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of Nineveh on the river Tigris, the circumference of which was sixty miles.

But Semiramis, his widow, being determined to eclipse the glory of her husband, founded Babylon, in which she employed two millions of labourers. When this enormous city was completed, she put herself at the head of a prodigious army, and marched into Media; after conquering which, she proceeded to visit Persia, and the rest of the Asiatic provinces, where she erected many magnificent palaces, laid out extensive gardens, and built a number of stately cities. At length ambition prompted her to attempt the conquest of India; and to supply the want of elephants in her army, she is said to have had recourse to a singular invention. Having caused three hundred thousand black oxen to be slain, their hides were stuffed in the form of elephants, each carried by a camel within, and led by a man. The army which she conducted on this expedition, amounted according to the same authority, to three millions of foot, two hundred thousand horse, one hundred thousand chariots, and one hundred thousand men on camels.

Strabrobates, king of India, was not intimidated on hearing of this invasion, but prepared to meet Semiramis, at the head of a prodigious army.

For some time the Assyrian heroine had the advantage, but at last the real elephants of India threw her army into confusion, and she was obliged to sue for peace, and return into her own country, where she shortly after died.

That such a woman never existed, we will not assert, but it is evident that there is more fable than truth in the wonderful relations which even

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grave historians have recorded of her extraordinary endowments and exploits.

Semiramis was succeeded by her son Ninyas, a pusillanimous, lascivious monarch, who shut himself up in his palace, that his subjects might regard him as a god.

In this course he was followed by all his successors, all of whom we shall pass over in silence, and content ourselves with noticing only Sardanapalus, the last and most vicious of the Assyrian monarchs.

This wretch descended to such a pitch of depravity as to assume the dress and manners of a prostitute. In his time the Medes, Babylonians, and Persians, assisted by the Arabians, shook off the Assyrian yoke. On hearing of this revolt and confederacy, the effeminate monarch was roused from his sloth, and marched at the head of his army against the rebels, whom he defeated in three different engagements. But the coalition being strengthened by the accession of the Bactrians, the imperial army was beaten, the camp taken by surprise, and Sardanapalus escaped with difficulty to the city of Nineveh. Here he was closely besieged above two years, but finding at last that the place could hold out no longer, and knowing that no favour would be shown him by the enemy, he set fire to his palace, and destroyed himself with all his concubines and eunuchs. Thus ended the Assyrian empire, after subsisting, according to Ctesias, whose account we have here given, one thousand four hundred years.

We now proceed to relate that which appears to be the only genuine history of Assyria.

Pul, or Phul, the first king of this country mentioned in scripture, subdued Israel in the.

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reign of Menahem, who became his tributary. After the flood 1957—B. C. 771.

Tizlath-Pileser, who is supposed to be the son of Pul, and succeeded him in the throne, likewise invaded Israel, and carried the inhabitants away captive into Assyria. He also fell upon Damascus, and having slain Rezin, he removed the people into his own kingdom, and thus put an end to that state.

B. C. 728. This monarch was succeeded by Shalmaneser, who compelled Hoshea, king of Israel, to pay him tribute. Some years afterwards Hoshea endeavoured to shake off the Assyrian yoke, with the assistance of So, king of Egypt. On this Shalmaneser marched into the land of Israel, and after a siege of three years took Samaria the capital city. He then returned into Assyria, taking with him the captive king and all his subjects.

B. C. 717. Having compelled Phœnicia to become tributary to him, and taken the cities of Sidon, Ace, and Palotyrus, from the Tyrians, he formed the design of conquering Tyre itself, but in this attempt he failed.

The next king of Assyria was Sennacherib, who marched into Judah, and forced king Hezekiah to pay him a yearly tribute of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty of gold.

Notwithstanding this submission on the part of the Jewish monarch, Sennacherib shortly afterwards sent his general Rabshaken, at the head of a large army, against Jerusalem. While the siege was carrying on with vigour, and by Sennacherib in person, he was informed that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, who is supposed to have been the Sabbacco of Herodotus, was about to

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enter his dominions. This intelligence obliged him to raise the siege, and to march against the invader; but at his departure he sent a letter to Hezekiah, in which he threatened that Judah should be added to the many nations which his arms had reduced to the Assyrian empire. He soon returned to put his threat into execution; but a destroying angel, according to the figurative language of Holy Writ, to express the divine interposition, visited his camp and slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand of his soldiers.* This judgment compelled the arrogant tyrant to hasten back into his own country, where he exercised the most horrid cruelties upon his subjects, but particularly upon the captive Jews, in revenge for the disgrace which had befallen him in his attempt to reduce their country. His conduct became so odious and intolerable even in his own family, that his own sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, conspired against him, and murdered him as he was offering up his devotions in the temple of his god Nisroch.

This abominable act, however, seems to have

* The most probable conjecture is, that this destruction was occasioned by the pestilential wind common in those countries, by the name of the *Samiel*, which, in passing over the deserts, is sometimes carried into the fertile provinces, and instantaneously slays both man and beast. It is observable, that even Herodotus had some knowledge of this catastrophe in the Assyrian army, though he has strangely misrepresented the real fact, as well as the name of the place: for he says, that while Sennacherib besieged Pelusium, immense numbers of rats and mice entered his camp in the night, and destroyed all the shield-straps and bow-strings. The story is so remarkable as to be evidently a perverted account of the scripture relation, which is of itself a far more probable circumstance.

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given just offence to the Assyrians; for the parricides were constrained to fly into Armenia, to escape the expected punishment which their crime deserved. Esar-Haddon, or, according to Ptolemy, Assaradin, the blind son of Sennacherib, then ascended the throne. B. C. 710.

This prince possessed better qualities than his father, and was very kind to the captive Jews, whom that tyrant had so cruelly oppressed. He reigned for some years quietly, but towards the close of his life, the desire of conquest arose in his breast; and after adding Babylon to the Assyrian crown, he put an entire end to the kingdom of Israel, and sent Manasseh, king of Judah, in chains to Babylon.

Flushed with this success, he marched into Egypt and Ethiopia, which countries he subdued, and carried numbers of their inhabitants into captivity. While he was engaged in this war, his general Tartan laid siege to the strong city of Ashdod, or Azotus, and took it.

Having thus extended his dominions, and revived the glory of the Assyrian name, which had been greatly eclipsed in the reign of his predecessor, this great prince spent the remainder of his days in peace, and died in a good old age. B. C. 668.

He was succeeded by Saosduchinus, or Saósducheus, who is the Nebuchadnezzar of the sacred history. This Prince followed up the great designs of his predecessor, and gained many advantages over the Medes, whose king Phraoites he slew, after a hard-fought battle in the plain of Ragan. Elated with this victory, he marched into Media, and having reduced many strong places, carried by storm the famous city of Ec-

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batana, which he completely destroyed. After this conquest he returned to Nineveh, where he celebrated his triumphs in a luxurious and splendid feast given to those who had attended him in his expedition, which feast lasted one hundred and twenty days.

The success of his arms swelled his mind to such a height of mad ambition, that he waged war against all the world, and began to regard himself as something more than mortal. In this fit of extravagance, he sent an army under Holofernes, with orders to put to death the inhabitants of every country who should resist his authority. The general appears to have been actuated by the same spirit as his master, for the cruelties which he committed struck terror among all the neighbouring nations. But the Jews had the courage to stand firm against the haughty Assyrian, and notwithstanding the ravages which he made, they defended their capital city, Bethulia, to the last extremity.

When all hopes of deliverance were lost, a beautiful lady, of a noble family, named Judith, accompanied by her maid, went out into the Assyrian camp, and being introduced to the general, he instantly became enamoured of her charms, and conducted her to his tent. At the entertainment which he gave out of respect to his fair visiter, Holofernes drank so freely, as soon to become inebriated, in which state he fell asleep. At this critical moment, when the company were all retired, Judith smote off the head of the general, and, putting it into a bag, went out of the tent, passed the guards, and returned safe to the city.

This act raised the drooping spirits of the

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Jews, who, taking advantage of the consternation of the Assyrians, sallied out, and defeated them with great slaughter. This story is circumstantially related in the apocryphal book of Judith; but it must be observed that there seems to be quite as much of truth in it as there is in the account of Semiramis, by Ctesias, which we have already condemned. That there never was such a woman as Judith, we will not say, but that the story is in all particulars true, we cannot admit, because sacred and profane history are silent upon an incident too remarkable to have passed unnoticed. Besides, that which stamps improbability upon the tale, is the strange name given to the capital city of Judah, which occurs in no part of Scripture, nor any where else.

B. C. 648. Saosduchinus was succeeded by Chynaladan, or Sarac, whose character and reign agree so exactly with the story of Sardanapalus, as to prove that he was the same person. In his reign, the Medes, headed by Cynares, the son of Phraortes, revolted, and, after defeating the Assyrians in a pitched battle, laid siege to Nineveh; but while they were thus engaged, the Scythians entered Media, in consequence of which Cynares was obliged to make a hasty retreat into his own country, to repel the invaders. About the same time Natopolasser, a Babylonian, whom Chynaladan had placed at the head of his army, revolted, and took possession of the kingdom of Babylon. The king of Assyria, seeing nothing but enemies around him, and knowing how odious his conduct had rendered him to his subjects, collected all his wealth into a pile in his palace, and then set

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fire to it, perishing with his whole family in the flames.

B. C. 626. The Assyrian monarchy did indeed subsist in some degree many years after this circumstance; but even the names of the succeeding kings have not reached us. We know nothing more of its history than that it was at last completely destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians.

During the first monarchy, Egypt, of which we have given a history in the first volume of this work, flourished, and claims the admiration of posterity on various accounts.

Next to the Egyptians, the Phœnicians were the most celebrated. Their skill in maritime affairs, their address and excellent policy in commercial concerns, have ever excited applause. Tyre, their chief city, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, about the year 570 B. C. Pygmalion is well known as a Phœnician monarch, whose sister, Dido, built Carthage.

The kingdom of the Lydians flourished under the first monarchy, chiefly during the reign of Crœsus, whose dominion was far extended over the regions of Asia, and who was considered as the richest king of his time.

This age produced Homer and Hesiod. To this period also must be referred the Sybils, women famous for their prophecies.

During the first monarchy, philosophy flourished in Egypt, and astronomy in Chaldea; and the celebrated cities of Nineveh and Babylon are the most decided proofs that the Assyrians and Chaldeans were well skilled in works of architecture and mechanics.



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## THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE.

BABYLON was known in ancient times by the names of *Shinar*, *Shinaar*, &c. that of Babylon is generally supposed to be derived from the tower of Babel, and that of Chaldæa, which is also appropriated to this country, from the Chaldæans.

These two names sometimes extend to the whole country, being taken for each other, and sometimes they are limited to certain parts; by Babylon or Babylonia, was meant the country in the neighbourhood of the city of Babylon; and by Chaldæa, that which extends southward to the Persian gulf. By the sacred writers the whole country is called Chaldæa, but profane authors usually denominate it Babylonia. It lies between 30 and 35 degrees north latitude, being bounded on the north by Mesopotamia, on the east by the Tigris, on the west by Arabia Deserta, and on the south by the Persian gulf and part of Arabia Felix.

The climate of this country is, for the most part, wholesome and temperate, though at particular seasons of the year, it is noxious and highly dangerous to the human constitution. The heat is so extraordinary, that the rich are accustomed to sleep even with a great part of their bodies immersed in water. For several months together it seldom or never rains, so that the inhabitants are at great labour and expense in watering their lands, the various engines used for that purpose being so numerous, especially along the banks of the Euphrates, as sometimes to impede the navigation of the river. This drought has been

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known to continue for two years and a half, and the inhabitants are satisfied if it rain but twice or thrice in the course of the year. The richness of the soil, the general excellence of the climate, and the industry of the inhabitants, rendered this country one of the most fertile on the face of the earth.

The palm-tree naturally flourished throughout this land, chiefly of the date kind, which afforded the inhabitants meat, wine, and honey. The grain produced in this country exceeded that of every other; the millet and the sesame shot up into the size of trees, and the leaves of the barley and wheat were usually four fingers broad. The sesame yielded them oil, instead of the olive; and the palm, wine, instead of the grape.

The great fertility of this country must be principally ascribed to the overflowing of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, which, during the months of June, July, and August, are unable to carry away the vast quantities of water produced by the melting of the snow from the mountains of Armenia. These inundations, though highly beneficial to the soil of the country, were, for a considerable length of time, destructive to the manual operations of the inhabitants, till, at length, taught by experience, they guarded against the effects of these annual floods, by cutting a great number of artificial rivers or canals, with which the waters were distributed, the country in general benefited, and an easy communication effected between the inhabitants. At this distance of time it is impossible to determine with any degree of precision, which of the immense rivers in this country were natural, and which were artificial, but geographers seem generally agreed, in assigning to Nebuchadnezzar

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the glory of having cut that branch of the Euphrates which falls into the river Tigris at Seleucia.

The Euphrates itself has its source from the Armenian mountains, whence it flows, dividing Arabia and Babylon from Mesopotamia, till, mixing with its fellow-traveller the Tigris, it falls at length into the Persian gulf. The course of this river is not rapid; in many parts it is not navigable but to very small vessels; its water is naturally turbid and foul, but when passed through a proper strainer, it is lighter, and preferable to any other in those regions, and from its excellence it obtained a name signifying the *water of desire*.

The vessels formerly used upon this river were round, without distinction of head or stern, and no better than great wicker baskets coated over with hides, which were guided with long oars. These vessels were of different sizes, some of them being capable of carrying a burden of palm-wine, to the weight of 5000 talents, besides a number of asses. At Babylon, the great mart of trade, they used to unload their cargo, sell their vessels, but kept the hides, which they brought home by land on their asses.

This country is remarkable for having enclosed, according to the most rational opinions, within its limits, at least great part of Paradise. Here also was the plain of *Shinar*, or Senjar, where the whole race of mankind were gathered together in one body after the flood, from whence they dispersed themselves over the face of the earth.

Nimrod was the founder of Babel; but, for many ages, it evidently appears to have remained a petty royalty, till the Assyrians paved the way to the empire it attained. Its government was,

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in its infancy, tyrannical and despotic, but at the death of Nimrod it fell to a level with other neighbouring states, till the Assyrians, in process of time, laid the foundations whereon it afterwards exalted itself as the *queen of the east*. The government, then, of Babylon, like that of Assyria, was strictly despotical, and its sceptre hereditary. The whole centered in the person of the king; all decrees issued from his mouth; he even affected the power, and claimed the worship, which belonged only to the Divinity. This was, perhaps, the most effectual means of intimidating not only his own subjects, but surrounding nations, who might otherwise have become rivals of his greatness, and have attempted to dispossess him of his kingdom. Upon a principle of this kind, the great conquerors of the east have always affected retirement, as too glorious to be beheld by vulgar eyes; thus contriving to keep in subjection a number of nations of different languages, complexions, and manners, to a person who must be a stranger to almost all of them.

The first monarchs of Babylon, however, administered their government by officers of several sorts, civil, and military; and accordingly we find them divided into three classes, supposed to be selected from among the most grave and noble persons in the empire: the first had the charge of the virgins, and their disposal in marriage; and to judge of all matters relating to the connubial state: the second took cognizance of theft: and the third of all other crimes. We find the subordinate powers under this mighty emperor divided into princes, governors, captains, judges,



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and counsellors, so that nothing was wanting to keep the peace and good order of the empire.

This great king of kings had an household equal to the sublimity of his station, the chief officers of which were, the captain of his guard, the prince of the eunuchs, and the prime minister. The first had the execution of his arbitrary commands; the second had the charge of the education and subsistence of the youth of the palace, and the last sat in the king's gate to hear complaints, and to pass judgments. Besides these, there was the master of the magicians always at hand to satisfy the king upon any thing he might want to know, with regard to futurity and prognostication.

Though these kings seem to have claimed such high honours, and to have considered the whole world as created for their use and service, yet we understand, that they sometimes condescended to banquet with their great lords and chief men of their dominions, of whom we read in the book of Daniel, that a thousand were at one time entertained by Beltshazzar. The common style of salutation to this sovereign was, *O King, live for ever!* and the man who was so happy as in a particular manner to gain his favour, was clothed with purple or scarlet, adorned with a chain of gold about his neck, and invested with some government.

The laws of the empire were in general vague and uncertain, depending wholly upon the will of the monarch, but one was fixed and irrevocable, which obliged all, especially the poorer sort of the people, to marry. By this law the daughters of every man were bestowed in marriage according to the will of the king or his officers, in a manner to be related hereafter.

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As the laws were changeable, so also the punishments unfixed, arbitrary, and rigorous, in proportion to the dispositions of the sovereign. Beheading, cutting to pieces, turning the criminal's house into a dunghill, and burning in a fiery furnace, are punishments which were executed by order of the kings of Babylon.

It is difficult to separate the religion and learning of the Babylonians into distinct heads. The Chaldæans, properly so called, were not only the priests, but the literati of the country. They were devoted to the business of religion, pretended to prophecy, to predict by the rules of augury, by the flight of birds, and the inspection of slaughtered victims:—they explained dreams and all the extraordinary phenomena of nature, as portending good or evil to men or nations, and it was thought by the vulgar, that these priests could by their incantations and invocations effect the future welfare of mankind. Having, by their situations, been early attentive to celestial observations, they concluded that the invisible Deity had created the heavenly bodies as the subordinate agents of his power, and as ministers of his will to govern the world.

Persuaded of this, they began to build temples to the stars, to sacrifice to them, to praise them, and to bow down in religious homage before them, expecting through their means to obtain the favour and good-will of God; so that they esteemed them as mediators between God and themselves. In process of time, impostors arose, and gave out that they had it enjoined from God himself, that some particular star should be worshipped in a certain manner, and that none of any age or degree should be exempt from this

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duty. Hence men began to erect temples, with images, under trees, upon the summit of hills or mountains, and to assemble in them for the purposes of divine worship. Other impostors, improving on the first, pretended to have been honoured with particular instructions from particular stars, concerning the exact mode of worship due to them, and what ought, and what ought not, to be done to please them.

Such was the rise of idolatry, which taking root among the Chaldæans, spread its branches so far as to keep in darkness, all the nations of the east. It is certain that the first image worshippers did not pretend to pay adoration to the uninformed wood, stone or metal, and that in their transition from planet-worship to image-worship, they pretended to have infused the virtues of the planets into the image that it was meant to represent, which they thought might be effected by forms of consecration; and by various incantations, they pretended to draw down from the stars their several intelligences into their respective idols; hence came all the superstition of the talismans, together with the various branches of magic and sorcery.

It is evident that this was the origin of image-worship, since the names of the principal Gods of the heathen in general, are those of the sun, moon, and five primary planets, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus.

This was the state of the old Babylonian religion, till they came to deify mortal men, as well as the celestial bodies, a practice, for which two reasons had been assigned; first, the grief of a parent for a child untimely snatched away,

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whose image he may have been tempted to honour as a god when dead; and to deliver, to those who were in subjection to him, ceremonies and sacrifices of duty and commemoration: and secondly, the skill of the workman, who, by his art might greatly contribute to the deception of the ignorant; since being ambitious to flatter some great man, he exerted all his powers to represent him beyond what he truly was; and that, by the beauty of his work, captivate and delude the unwary multitude, who took him now for a God, whom a little before they honoured as a man.

It has been generally supposed that Ninus was the first person who set up images to be worshipped, and particularly one representing his father Belus, granting privileges to those subjects and pardons to those criminals who resorted to it. To Belus, as the founder of the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, not only a temple was erected, but an immense building, which consisted of eight towers, raised one upon another, and in the uppermost was a bed magnificently set forth, and a golden table near it, but no image; nor was any person suffered to be here in the night, but a particular woman, who, as the priests gave out, was preferred by the god before all others. Beneath this was another temple, in which was a gigantic image of Jupiter (Belus) all of pure gold, with a table before him of the same metal: his throne was also of gold, so that the whole work was valued at eight hundred talents of gold.

As there were two gods in this temple, there belonged to it also two altars, one of a moderate size, and another much larger; upon the former none but sucking victims might be sacrificed,

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and upon the great one, none that were not full grown.

Such was the god Belus among the Babylonians, and such his temple and the rank he held in it; but whether they meant by him, either the sun, or their founder Pul, or whether they transformed him into the sun, or kept the worship of their heavenly body, and their hero, so distinct as never to confound them with each other, is a question too difficult to be decided with accuracy.

The deity next in order to this was Venus, whom the Babylonians styled Mylitta, signifying mother, and the Greeks Urania; for it was to her that the daughters or women of the country were, once in their life time, bound to make a sacrifice of their virtue, a practice which will be more particularly described among the manners and customs of this people. This goddess had a temple at Aphac, at Babylon, and probably in other places; but, for the convenience of those who had no temples among them, the priests carried about small tabernacles, or models of different temples, consulting, at the same time, the devotion of the people and their own interest.

This goddess was worshipped under a great variety of different names; she was also considered as belonging to both sexes, and accordingly was worshipped by her votaries sometimes in the attire of men, and sometimes in that of women, the men and the women mutually changing dresses with each other, whence it has been supposed, that Moses forbid *the women to wear that pertaineth to the man, or a man to put on a woman's garment.* The worship of this planet

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or idol, must therefore have been of very ancient date, and a book on magic is quoted by Maimonides, in which it is enjoined, that a man should put on the flowered garments of a woman when he stood before the star Venus, and a woman the arms and armour of a man when she paid her devotions to Mars.

We have a general view given us of the Babylonish temples, idols, and priests, in the book of Jeremiah. Their idols were of gold, of silver, and of wood, and carried about in procession, surrounded with the multitudes, worshipping them. They were crowned, and clothed in purple, black with the smoke of incense. Their temples were full of smoke and dust, caused by the numerous resort of votaries. The priests made free with the gold and silver presented to their gods, bestowing it upon favourite women, whom they accounted sacred. Whatever was offered as a sacrifice to their gods, they appropriated to themselves; cloathing their wives and children with the garments that had been given to adorn their idols. In return for which they were sure to light up numbers of tapers and candles to their images, and to sit in the temples with their beards and heads closely shaven, uncovered, and with their garments rent, crying out before their gods as for the lamentation of some person deceased.

The horrid custom of sacrificing human victims to appease or conciliate their gods, was first practised by the Babylonians, and from them it was communicated to the superstitious of the surrounding nations. There are traces of their ancient cruelty to be discerned in the worship and rites of the Syrian, or rather the Assyrian

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goddess of Hierapolis, to whom parents, without remorse, sacrificed their children, by throwing them down a precipice in her temple.

It is now time to speak of the customs of the Babylonians, of which one of the chief seems to have been the manner of disposing of their young women in marriage. No man had any power over his own daughters, but as soon as they were fit to marry, they were exposed in some public place appointed for the purpose, where, in the midst of a crowd of men, who attended upon these occasions, they were sold one by one. The most beautiful were first put up, and delivered to the highest bidder. When all who were valuable on account of their charms were disposed of, the money that was raised by this sale was applied in behalf of those to whom nature had not been so lavish of her exterior gifts. These were then offered to such as would take the least money with them; and the poorer sort, who set a higher value upon money than beauty, were as eager in under-bidding as the wealthy men had been in over-bidding each other for the fair ones. The consequence of this was, that their young women were all disposed of in marriage; the lower class of men were obliged to give security for their taking those they had chosen, before they were in possession of the money they had agreed to take with them.

The Babylonians thought themselves polluted even by the use of matrimony, and were not allowed to touch any thing after it, till they had purified themselves by perfuming and washing their bodies.

Every Babylonish woman was once in her life time bound to sacrifice her virtue to some strange

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man, at the temple of Venus. They were crowned with knots and garlands, and ranged in long ranks before the temple, each rank being parted from the other by a line, that the men might conveniently pass between them, and choose those they liked best. They declared their choice by throwing money into the lap of the woman they most admired, and saying, as they threw it, *I implore the goddess Mylitta for thee.* The money, however little, was by no means refused, it was accounted sacred, nor had the women the power of rejecting any man that accosted her in the form prescribed, but she was absolutely obliged to follow him without delay.

For five days together every year, they celebrated a festival called *Sacca*, during which the servants commanded their masters, one of them being for the time constituted chief over the house, and wearing a kind of royal garment called *Zogana.*

Their manner of treating their sick was very extraordinary. Having no physicians, they used to expose them publicly in the most frequented places, that every one might see them and offer their advice, if they had any knowledge of the case, either from their own experience, or from the experience of others, nor was it lawful for any that passed by to omit this office. They buried their dead in wax and honey, and mourned for them after the manner of the Egyptians.

The Babylonians were excessively credulous, superstitious, and as debauched as a nation could be. Their credulity appears from the high veneration they paid to their priests, jugglers, and superstitious practices. So prone were they to idolatry that we find Nebuchadnezzar falling



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down before Daniel to worship him. And debauchery was encouraged by their princes and priests; the religious rites paid to their great goddess, and the reverence paid to prostitution, rendered them the most sensual and abandoned people on the face of the earth.

They seem to have affected pride and effeminacy in their dress: their under garment was a linen vest, down to their heels, over which they had another of woollen, and over all, a white mantle or cloak. They wore their own hair; their heads were adorned with a tiara or mitre, and their bodies were anointed with the oil of sesame. Each of them wore a seal-ring on the finger, and in their hand a wrought staff or sceptre, adorned at the head with some particular ensign or figure, without which it was unlawful to appear with one of these staves.

The Babylonians were famed for learning, particularly the Chaldæans, who were their priests, philosophers, astronomers, soothsayers, &c. In respect to their pretended claim to learning, and supernatural knowledge, the Chaldæans are distinguished from the Babylonians, and are said to have inhabited a region peculiar to themselves, next to the Arabians and the Persian gulf. They were divided into several sects, distinguished by names taken either from particular places, where different doctrines on the same points were held, or from particular persons who had doctrines peculiar to themselves. Their learning was not acquired after the manner of the Greeks, but by tradition from father to son; and being exempt from all laborious duties, and offices of trust, their only business was to apply themselves to the instruction they received.

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They never departed from principles early imbibed, being fully satisfied with what they had received from their ancestors, and, by a tenacious adherence to this, they became perfectly knowing in what they professed.

They taught that the world was eternal, but acknowledged the superintendance of a divine Providence, by whom the heavenly bodies were directed in their course. They were the first who cultivated astronomy, discovered the exact motions of the planets, and pretended to understand the influence they have over things below, and from that to be able to foretel what was hidden in the womb of futurity. From these delusive amusements they boasted of a knowledge of what was to come; of a power of averting evil and procuring good; on which account they obtained the name of magicians.

The planets they called interpreters, since their motions and appearances portended to them the will and pleasure of the gods. Sometimes they judged by their rising, sometimes by their setting, and sometimes by the colour and degree of their light, whether storms of wind, of rain, or excessive drought might be expected. From the same appearances they pretended to predict the approach of comets, eclipses of the sun and moon, earthquakes, and the whole train of what were considered as the awful forerunners of the good and bad fortunes of nations in general, and of monarchs and private persons in particular.

Under the six planets they ranged thirty stars, which they called counselling gods; of these, half took cognizance of what was done under the earth; and the other half, of what was done

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by men, or transacted in the heavens. They maintained that once in ten days one of the superior stars descended to the inferior as a messenger from those above; and that, in return, an inferior one ascended to the superior in the same quality; and that this correspondence was natural to them and would continue for ever. Twelve of these counselling gods presided over the signs of the Zodiac; while twenty-four other stars were selected from that broad belt, twelve towards the north pole, and twelve towards the south; those within sight were assigned as guardians of the living, and the others were the constellations of the dead.

As the Chaldæans were peculiarly the men of learning, so the Babylonians properly so called, applied themselves to the arts; their immense buildings, which could not have been effected without much skill in geometry, prove that they must have been good mathematicians and mechanics. But it is not easy to say how far they excelled in perspective, and the true harmony of proportion; and it is certain that they never attained to any superior excellence in painting and statuary.

Music and poetry were probably but little attained to; in physic they had no regular science, as is evident from their mode of treating the sick. The Babylonians were great architects, ingenious in casting of metals, famous for their manufactures, particularly for their rich embroideries, magnificent carpets, and fine linen; so much so that we read of Cato selling a Babylonian mantle, which had been left to him by inheritance, as being what he was ashamed to wear. And it has been said, that at Rome

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more than 6000l. had been paid for a suit of Babylonian hangings.

This people was not only divided into two great tribes, the Babylonians and Chaldæans, but into other subordinate sects; three of these subsisted entirely on fish dried in the sun and converted into a kind of paste; others lived on salted bats; but whether this practice proceeded from superstition or want is uncertain, though it could hardly be owing to the latter in so plentiful a country.

The trade of this ancient people is no where professedly treated of, but it must have been considerable when Babylon was in the meridian of her glory. This city was situated in the midst of the old world; and by means of two great rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris, had a very easy communication with the western and northern parts, and with the eastern by means of the Persian gulf. That the Babylonians had much shipping of their own, and were considerable as navigators, is evident, since their city is styled by the prophet *a city of waters:* and their extensive commerce is described in the book of Revelations.*

We might here consider the Babylonians in two very different views: first, as composing a small, though, perhaps, a formidable kingdom, immediately after the Deluge; and secondly, as constituting a potent and wide spreading empire, founded by, and at last rising upon, the ruins of the Assyrians, their brethren. But as it is desirable to confine our history to a detail of well authenticated facts, without amusing

* Chap. xvii. 2—19.



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the reader with fictitious or doubtful relation, we shall pass over the earlier periods of the Babylonian history, which depends more upon conjecture than upon fact, as well as that chasm of several hundred years, from the time of Nimrod, after which, the first king to be mentioned is Nabonassar, so well known from the æra which passes under his name.

B. C. 747.

It appears that the Babylonian kingdom rose about the same time with that of Assyria, since only twenty-four years after the appearance of Pul, the founder of the Assyrian monarchy, Nabonassar is mentioned as king of Babylon. And it is evident, both from sacred and profane history, that Babylon was an independent nation, governed by its own kings, when the Assyrian monarchy was in its full glory. But we are not informed by what means Nabonassar obtained, or how he and his successors contrived to keep in possession, a kingdom bordering on the empire of the Assyrians, who, under the conduct of their ambitious and warlike princes, grasped at nothing less than the sovereignty of the east. With this view they waged war with, and imposed their yoke upon almost all surrounding nations. It is probable that Pul, the first Assyrian monarch, left two sons, Tizlath-pileser and Nabonassar, of whom, the former took possession of Assyria, and the latter of Babylon, living in strict unity with one another; a circumstance which will account for the independence of the Babylonian kingdom.

Among the successors of Nabonassar we must notice Mardoc-empad, who was undoubtedly the Marodack-balan of the Scriptures, and was the

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first Babylonian monarch whom we find having had intercourse with the kings at Jerusalem. He sent a special embassy to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, and to inquire, as it is generally supposed, concerning the sun's retrogression. As the kings of Assyria and Babylon were at that time united by the strictest union, nothing less than an event so extraordinary could justify the king of Babylon in corresponding with a prince, then at open war with the Assyrian monarch.

We omit the mentioning of several other sovereigns of this kingdom, of whom we know little more than the order in which they reigned, till we come to Assar-addin, who, after he had presided for some time over the Assyrian kingdom, seized upon that of Babylon, where he reigned thirteen years. Two of his successors only maintained their power over the empire, when Nabopallasar seized upon it himself, transferred the seat of the Assyrian monarchy to Babylon, and entering into an alliance with Cyaxares the Mede, joined with him in a war against Assyria, which they reduced to a very low condition. He did not live, however, to see its final destruction, for an irruption of the Scythians put a stop to the progress of the new allies for the space of twenty-eight years.

This prince is called by contraction Nabulassar; he is also called Nebuchadonosor; and Nebuchadnezzar. As the Assyrians, as well as the Babylonians and Medes, were at this time wholly employed in defending themselves against the Scythians, Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, laid hold of so favourable an opportunity to recover the city of Carchemish, then subject to

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the king of Assyria. King Josiah attempted to oppose the Egyptian on his march, but his army was routed and himself slain. This success, and particularly the surrender of Carchemish, encouraged the governor of Phœnice to revolt from Nabopallasar, who being advanced in years, took his son Nebuchadnezzar for a partner in the kingdom, and sent him at the head of an army against the Egyptians, and revolted Syrians. Over the Egyptians the young prince gained a complete victory, retook Carchemiah, and put the garrison to the sword.

B. C. 606. Elated with this success, he marched into Judea, took Jerusalem, rifled the temple, and seized on Jehoiakim, intending to have sent him prisoner to Babylon; but upon the promise of becoming an annual tributary, the Babylonian left him as a kind of viceroy. This victorious prince, taking advantage of his success, made himself master of all the country between the Nile and the Euphrates. In the mean time, by the death of his father, he became sole king of Babylon, and his first care was to enlarge and adorn the seat of empire. While he was thus employed, he was greatly harassed by dreams, one of which, though he was unable to recal any of the circumstances connected with it, gave him peculiar uneasiness. In this distress he assembled his magicians, and inquired of them what his dream had been; but they unanimously answered that it was not their province to interpret dreams, the gods only being capable of revealing to man what he had dreamt. Provoked by this answer, the king ordered them all to be put to death; but before his commands could be executed, Daniel, who had been brought

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to Babylon among the other Jewish captives, prevailed upon the captain of the guard to introduce him to the king, to whom he gave such complete satisfaction on the subject of his dream, that the monarch fell upon his face worshipping Daniel, and acknowledged his God to be the God of gods, and Lord of kings. He also gave him extraordinary demonstrations of esteem, invested him with the government of Babylon, and appointed him chief of the wise men of the city.

Cyaxares the Mede, having entered into an alliance with Nebuchadnezzar, they marched against Nineveh, took that proud metropolis, levelled it with the ground, and put an end to the Assyrian empire. Nebuchadnezzar soon after sent an army against Jerusalem, which he himself joined, and having completely invested the city, he ordered the king Jehoiachin, who came out to him with his mother, and his whole court, in a most submissive manner, to be arrested and carried prisoners to Babylon. Having made himself master of the place, he ransacked and plundered it a second time, and carried off an immense booty, and such numbers of captives of all ranks and conditions, that scarcely a sufficient number of hands were left to cultivate the land. He then set Mattaniah on the throne of that desolate kingdom, changing his name to Zedekiah, at the same time laying him under a certain tribute, and obliging him to take an oath of fidelity and allegiance.

This mighty prince, the instrument of God's wrath to punish the wickedness of the nations about him, had his victories always preceded by prophecies from the mouth of Jeremiah; who

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at one time when the kings of the Moabites, Tyrians and Zidonians, would have tempted Zedekiah, the thoughtless king of Jerusalem, to rise against Nebuchadnezzar, sent to each of their ambassadors in his court, a present of yokes and bonds, to be carried to their masters with this declaration, That the Lord of hosts, the God of the whole earth, had doomed them all to be servants to the Babylonian monarch, and that those who quietly submitted, and faithfully obeyed the king, should find mercy and remain quietly in their own land; but that the disobedient and rebellious should be utterly destroyed.

However great and terrible Nebuchadnezzar is represented to have been, yet several of the tributary nations soon attempted to throw off their allegiance, and to free themselves from the severity of his yoke. Putting himself at the head of his army, he advanced to the frontiers, resolving to punish those who presumed to call in question the right of his authority. Being, however, in suspence, with which people he should commence his operations, he referred the determination to the ordinary methods of divination in practice with the Chaldæans, who, having consulted the entrails of animals, their images, and their arrows,* gave it as their opi-

* This practice of divining by arrows continued among the Arabs, till Mohammedism prevailed, which absolutely forbid it. The arrows used for this purpose were without heads or feathers, and were kept in the temple of some idol, in whose presence they consulted. Seven such arrows were kept at the temple of Mecca, but three only were used in divination, on one of which was written, "*My Lord hath commanded me;*" on another, "*My Lord hath forbidden me;*" and the third was a blank. If the

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nion, that the war should first be commenced against the Jews. The Babylonian army marched from the capital, and in a short time put an end to the Israelitish kingdom; and the victorious monarch returned to his metropolis, adding great strength and glory to it, by the immense booty he brought with him, and a numerous accession of new inhabitants.

With the gold he amassed in this expedition, it is thought he erected the monstrous colossus of that metal, in honour of his god Bel; it was sixty cubits in height, and six cubits in breadth. Before this he commanded all persons to fall down and pay religious homage; but three Hebrew youths, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, courageously refused to comply with the king's command, and on that account were thrown into a burning furnace, from which they miraculously escaped unhurt. To this wonderful scene Nebuchadnezzar was an eye witness; and convinced of his own impiety and folly, he decreed, that whosoever should blaspheme the name of the God of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, should be cut in pieces, and his house be turned into a dunghill.

This mighty prince, in the twenty-second year of his reign, crossed the Euphrates, subdued Tyre and many other nations, made himself

first were drawn, they looked on it as an approbation of the enterprise in question; if the second, they drew a contrary conclusion; but if the third happened to be drawn, they mixed them and drew them over again, till a decisive answer was obtained. These divining arrows were generally consulted before any thing of moment was undertaken, as when a man was about to marry, or about to go a journey, or the like.

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master of Egypt, and carried away a great number of the inhabitants into captivity. About the same period he conquered several of the other African states.

Thus far we have seen him as a warrior, excelling all the Babylonian princes who went before him; we are now to consider him as the founder of the magnificence of Babylon, one of the wonders of the world. The most famous works in and about it, were the walls of the city; the temple of Belus; Nebuchadnezzar's palace; the hanging gardens; the banks of the river; the artificial lake, and the canals.

The walls of the city were sixty miles in compass, three hundred and fifty feet in height, and eighty-seven feet thick. In them there were an hundred gates, all of solid brass; between every two of these gates, at proper distances, were three towers, and four more at the corners of the great square, and three between each of these corners and the next gate on either side. From the twenty-five gates on each side of this square, there was a straight street extending to the corresponding gate in the opposite wall, whence the whole number of streets was but fifty, each being fifteen miles long: the houses were three or four stories in height, and beautified with all manner of ornaments.

A branch of the Euphrates divided the city, running through the midst of it from north to south, over which, in the very middle of the city, was a bridge a furlong in length; at each end were two palaces of considerable magnitude and splendour. It is certain that this city was never wholly inhabited, so that even in the meridian of its glory it might be compared to the

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flower of the field, which flourishes to-day, and to-morrow is no more.

The next great work was the temple of Belus. The wonderful tower that stood in the middle thereof was not his work, but was built many ages before, and is supposed to have been the famous tower of Babel.

Next this temple, on the same east side of the river, stood the old palace of the kings of Babylon, being four miles in circumference. Exactly opposite to it, on the other side of the river, was the new palace built by Nebuchadnezzar, eight miles in circumference, and consequently four times as large as the old one.

But nothing was more wonderful at Babylon than the hanging-gardens, which Nebuchadnezzar made in complaisance to his wife, who, being a Mede, and retaining a strong inclination for the mountains and forests of her own country, desired to have something like them at Babylon. They were four hundred feet square, and consisted of terraces one above another, carried up to the height of the wall of the city; the ascent from terrace to terrace being by steps ten feet wide. The whole pile consisted of substantial arches upon arches, and was strengthened by a wall surrounding it on every side, twenty-two feet thick. The floors were made so as to retain the moisture of the mould, which was sufficiently deep to afford space for the roots of the greatest trees that were planted on the terrace, together with an immense number of shrubs of every kind. Upon the uppermost of these terraces was a reservoir, filled by a certain engine with water from the river, from whence the gardens on the other terraces were supplied.



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The other works attributed to Nebuchadnezzar, were the banks of the river, the artificial canals, and the great lake. The canals were cut out on the east side of the Euphrates, to convey away the waters of that river, when it overflowed its banks, into the Tigris, before they reached Babylon.

The lake was forty miles square, and about forty feet deep; it was originally contrived to receive the waters of the river while the banks were building on each side of it. But both the lake and the canal that led to it were preserved after that work was completed, being found of great use, not only to prevent the overflowing, but to keep water all the year, as in a common reservoir, to be let out, on proper occasions, by sluices, for the improvement of the land.

The tower, or temple, stood to the time of Xerxes, who, returning from the Grecian expedition, first plundered it of its immense wealth, demolished the whole, and laid it in ruins. Alexander proposed to rebuild it, but the death of that conqueror put a stop to the design. From this time the glory of Babylon rapidly declined, till at length the place on which this monument of human industry and art had reared its stupendous head, was entirely forgotten.

We are now to behold this greatest among mortal princes, in a different and truly melancholy point of view, not only hurled from his throne, but degraded beneath the meanest of the race of mankind, and exhibited as an example of terror to princes, who, swoln with vanity, and drunk with power, would arrogate to themselves divine honours.

Scarcely had Nebuchadnezzar returned from

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the wars, before he was admonished by a dream, which none of his wise men could interpret. The prophet Daniel, however, declared that it was prophetic of the sentence denounced by heaven against him, in consequence of which he was to be driven out from the society of men, and become as a beast, in which state he would remain till he should be brought to a due sense of the supremacy and omnipotence of God, when the kingdom should once more revert to him.

This awful and extraordinary sentence seems to have made no lasting impression upon the king, for in a very few months after the denunciation, as he was walking in his palace, or, as some critics think, on the uppermost of the terraces of his hanging garden, and contemplating the glories of the city he had adorned, unable to contain the pride of his heart, he exclaimed, "Is "not this Great Babylon, that I have built, for "the house of the kingdom, by the might of my "power, and for the honour of my majesty?" No sooner had he thus spoken, than a voice from heaven proclaimed, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, "to thee it is spoken, the kingdom is departed "from thee." And we are informd, that he was immediately driven from the society of men, and dwelt with the beasts of the field; that he ate grass as an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. Those who do not take these words in their strict literal sense, suppose, that losing his senses, he wandered about the fields, and took up his abode there with the cattle, till seven years had passed over his head.

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During this disorder, his son Evil-merodach administered the government so ill, as to draw down upon him his father's heavy displeasure, and a just punishment. When the king came to his right understanding, he satisfied his injured subjects by exemplary justice on his son; and giving the honour and praise due to God, acknowledging him to be above all, he continued in the possession of his kingdom a year longer, and then died, having reigned about forty-four years.

The circumstances of his death have been thus related: Having ascended to the top of his palace, he prophesied to this effect—"Behold, "O Babylonians, *I* foretel you a calamity at "hand, which not the fates, nor our forefather "Belus can possibly avert. A Persian mule "shall come, and, by the assistance of your own "gods, shall load your necks with a most gal-"ling yoke; and this destruction shall befal "you by means of a Mede, in whom the Assy-"rians were accustomed to glory. O, would "that he, ere thus he betrays my people, were "swallowed up by some whirlpool, or over-"whelmed in the depths of the sea; or that, "hurried away into some lonely desert, he might "there remain a wanderer, never to behold the "footsteps of mankind. O grant unto me, before "he is agitated by this rage of mind, to share "a happier end." Thus speaking, he was suddenly snatched from the sight of men: the same end Semiramis is said to have made.

Evil-merodach, who succeeded his father, by a false step in the early part of his life, laid the foundation of that animosity in the Medes and

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Persians, which brought on the dissolution of the Babylonian empire. For, having in a great hunting match entered the country of the Medes, he began, without any provocation to plunder and lay waste the neighbouring lands. Upon which, Astyages the Mede, attended by his son Cyaxares, his grandson Cyrus, and such troops as could be collected on the emergency, marched out to meet him, being determined to repel force by force. The parties engaged, Evil-merodach was put to the route, and pursued with great slaughter to his own borders.

Evil-merodach had reigned but two years, when he was murdered by Neriglissar his sister's husband, who succeeded to the vacant throne. The first act of this prince was to endeavour to excite all the neighbouring monarchs against the growing power of the Medes and Persians. On the beginning of the fourth year of his reign, preparations were made on both sides; the Medes and Persians were commanded by Cyrus, the Babylonians, with their allies, took the field under the conduct of Neriglissar, and Crœsus, king of Lydia. The Babylonian army, consisting of a mixed multitude of various nations, exceeded very much in numbers that of their opponents, till they were joined by reinforcements under Tigranes, the Armenian. In the midst of the preparations, ambassadors arrived from India, to inquire into the grounds and causes of the war, with an offer of mediation, if it might be accepted, and with a threat, in case it was rejected, of joining those who should appear to have the most justice on their side.

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It is not known how this embassy was concluded, but the commencement of hostilities was greatly to the disadvantage of Neriglissar. Cyrus subdued the Chaldæans, and obliged them to take refuge in their mountains. These Chaldæans were the most valiant race of men in all these parts, carrying with them no other arms than a wicker shield and two javelins; they entered willingly into foreign pay, being naturally addicted to war, and very poor.

When the main armies engaged, the Babylonians were unable to stand the shock, but betook themselves to flight; Cyrus pursued them even into their intrenchments, killed Neriglissar, and took a multitude of prisoners, and the baggage of the whole army.

The death of the king was an infinite loss to the Babylonians, for he was a man of great courage, conduct, and wisdom. His loss was the more deplored on account of the tyrannical government of his son and successor, Laboroscarchod, who was in every respect the reverse of his father, being addicted to all manner of wickedness, cruelty, and injustice. Two acts of his cruelty towards Gobryas and Godates, Babylonian lords, are particularly mentioned. The only son of the former he slew at a hunting match, because he pierced with his dart a wild beast which the king had missed. The other he caused to be made an eunuch, because one of his concubines had commended his beauty. This king was slain by his own subjects, and was succeeded by Nabonadius, who had the chief hand in the murder.

It appears that Nabonadius was the same with

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him who is called in the book of Daniel, Belshazzar, and that in his reign the proud city of Babylon, the metropolis of the east, was completely ruined. Cyrus, having subdued the several nations from the Ægean sea to the Euphrates, and also Syria and Arabia, bent his march toward Babylon, and closely besieged the city. Having spent two years without gaining any considerable advantage over the place, he at last resolved upon the following stratagem, which gave him complete possession of it. Being informed, that a great annual feast was to be kept in Babylon, and that all the inhabitants, on that occasion, were accustomed to spend the night in drinking and debauchery, he chose that as a proper time to surprise them, and accordingly sent a strong detachment to the head of the canal leading to the great lake, with orders to break down the bank at a certain hour, and to turn the whole current into the lake. At the same time he appointed a body of troops at the place where the river entered into the city, and another where it came out, ordering them to march in by the bed of the river, as soon as it was fordable. These troops were commanded by Gobryas and Godates, who, on account of the cruelty experienced by them in the former reign, had joined the army and cause of Cyrus. When they entered the city, they found all the gates open, and were enabled to penetrate into the very centre of it without opposition: and meeting at the palace, according to a pre-concerted plan, they surprised the guards, and cut them to pieces. Those who were in the palace, opening the gates to inquire into the cause of the confusion, the Persians rushed in, took posses-

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sion of the palace, and killed Nabonadius, who, sword in hand, came out to meet them. The rest submitted, and the Medes and Persians became masters of the place. Thus was an end put to the Babylonian empire, and the prophecies fulfilled which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, had uttered against it. In that very night the king had entertained a thousand of his lords at a great banquet, and having profaned the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, he first saw written on the wall of the banqueting room, and afterwards heard from the mouth of Daniel, the awful doom. *that his kingdom was taken from him, and given to the Medes and Persians;* a sentence that was probably executed before the prophet could well have explained to the terrified monarch and his guests its true nature and import.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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